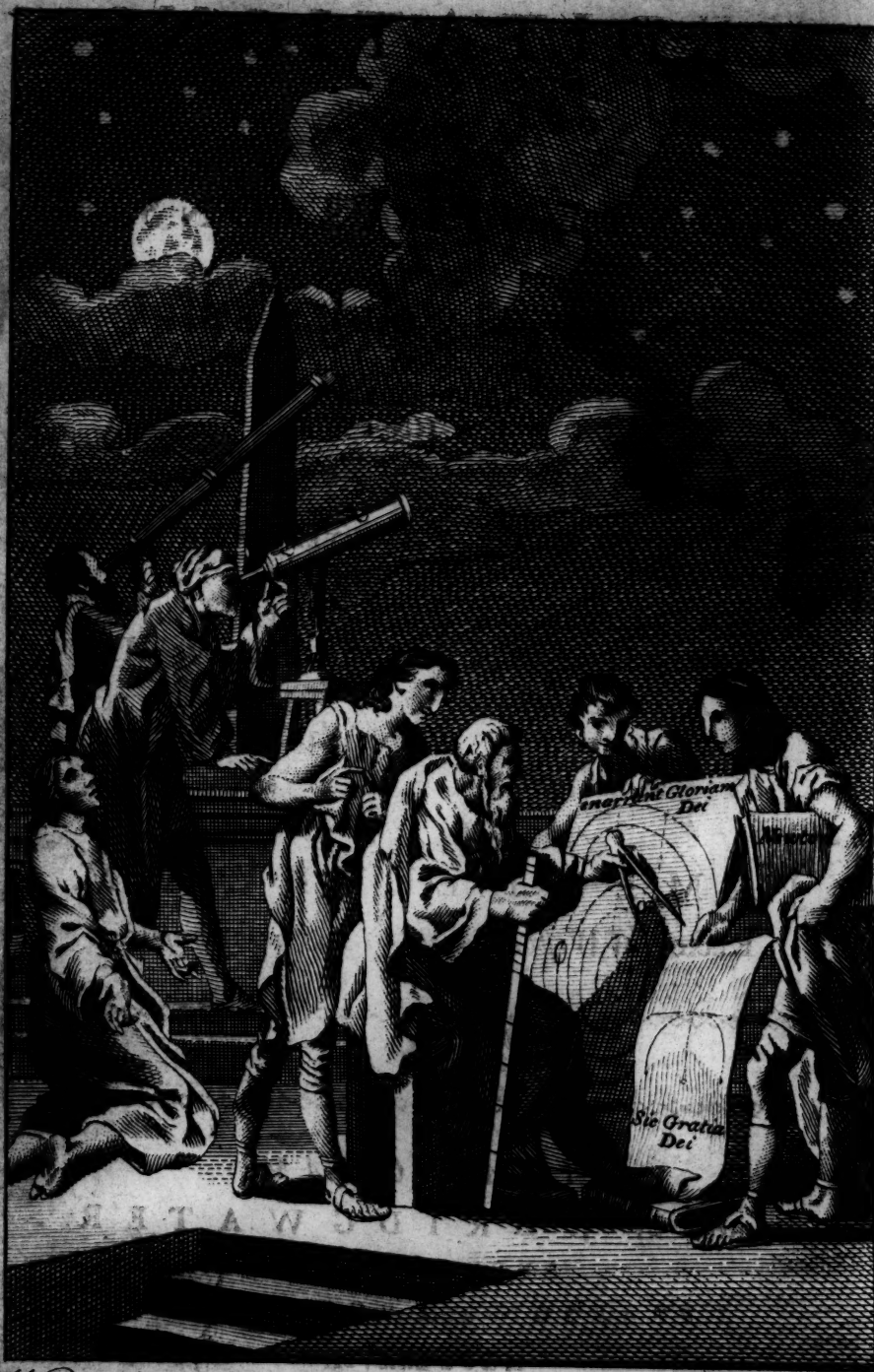




When I consider thy Heavens, the Work of thy Fingers;  
the Moon and the Stars which thou hast ordained.  
Lord what is Man that thou art mindfull of him,  
and the Son of Man that thou visitest him. Psalm viii



1508/1411  
MEDITATIONS

A N D

CONTEMPLATIONS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

CONTAINING,

VOL. I.

MEDITATIONS among  
the TOMBS;

REFLECTIONS on a  
FLOWER-GARDEN;

And, A DESCANT on  
CREATION.

VOL. II.

CONTEMPLATIONS on  
the NIGHT;

CONTEMPLATIONS on  
the STARRY - HEA-

VENS; And,  
A WINTER-PIECE.

B Y

JAMES HERVEY, A. M.

Rector of *Weston-Favel*, in *Northamptonshire*.

~~~~~  
VOL. II.  
~~~~~

BIRMINGHAM:

Printed by J. BRIDGWATER;

AND SOLD BY

PEARSON and ROLLASON.

MDCCCLXXVII.

# The Frontispiece

Exhibits a View of the history of the  
—On the Top of an Observatory, two  
long examine the celestial bodies with  
Telescopes; Instruments, which gave rise  
to the most important improvements in the

Science of Astronomy



An aged Philosopher, who was  
famous for his discoveries in  
Astronomy, and who was the  
first who discovered the  
existence of the fixed stars

was the first who discovered the  
existence of the fixed stars

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existence of the fixed stars

## The FRONTISPIECE.

Exhibits a View of the nocturnal Heavens.  
 —On the Top of an OBSERVATORY, two Persons examine the celestial Bodies with their Telescopes: Instruments, which gave Rise to the most important Improvements in the Science of *Astronomy*.

An aged Philosopher is represented, instructing his Pupils. He describes, with his Compasses, the Order and Courses of the Planets; according to the *Newtonian Hypothesis*, intimated by a Book bearing that great Author's Name.—The whole Tenour of the Lecture, in Concert with the whole Structure and Economy of the Skies, ENARRANT GLORIAM DEI, Professedly declare the Glory of GOD.—Behind the Philosopher stands one of his Scholars, with an Air of close Attention, computing on his Fingers the Distances, the Magnitudes, the Velocities of the planetary Orbs.—Another at his Right-hand, attending to the Description of the stupendous System, is struck with Surprise, and impressed with Awe.—A third, with conscious Humiliation in his Countenance, holds a Scroll, inscribed with a Diagram; expressing the joint Action of the *centrifugal* and *centripetal* Forces. As by the one, the Planets are continually en-



deavouring to fly off; but by the other, are perpetually drawn towards the Centre of their Motion; SIC GRATIA DEI, *Such is the Operation of Divine Grace:* correcting the irregular Impulse of our natural Depravity; determining our Desires to the Centre of Happiness; and directing our Goings in the Circle of Duty.—A Youth on the Left, overwhelmed with Veneration for the Almighty Maker, in a Transport of Gratitude, and a Posture of Adoration, pours out his Soul in those emphatical Words; *When I consider thy Heavens, the Work of thy Fingers, the Moon and the Stars which thou hast ordained:—*LORD, *what is Man, that thou art mindful of him; and the Son of Man, that thou visitest him?* Psal. viii. 3, 4.



T O

PAUL ORCHARD, Esq.

O F

Stoke - Abbey, in Devonshire.

Dear Sir,

**A**S your honoured Father was pleased to make choice of me, to answer in your Name at the Font, and to exercise a sort of *Guardianship* over your spiritual Interests; permit me, by putting these little Treatises into your Hand, to fulfil some Part of that solemn Obligation.

*GRATITUDE* for many signal Favours, and a conscientious Regard to my sacred Engagement, have long ago inspired my Breast with the warmest Wishes, both for your true *Dignity*, and real *Happiness*. Nor can I think of a more endearing, or a more effectual Way, of advancing either the one or the other, than to set before you a Sketch of your excellent *Father's* Character.—Illustrious Examples are the most winning Incitements to Virtue. And

none can come attended with such particular Recommendations to You, Sir, as the Pattern of that worthy Person, from whom you derive your very Being.

A MOST cordial, and reverential Esteem for the *Divine Word*, was one of his remarkable Qualities. Those Oracles of Heaven were his principal Delight, and his inseparable Companions. Your Gardens, your solitary Walks, and the Hedges of your Fields can witness \*, with what an unwearied Assiduity He exercised Himself in the Law of the LORD. From hence He fetched his Maxims of Wisdom, and formed his Judgment of Things. The sacred *Precepts*, were the Model of his Temper, and the Guide of his Life; while the precious *Promises*, were the Joy of his Heart, and his Portion for ever.

*IMPROVING Company* was another of his most relishing Pleasures. Few Gentlemen were better furnished, either with Richness of Fancy, or Copiousness of Expression, to bear a shining part in Conversation. With these Talents, He always endeavoured to give some *useful*, generally some *religious*, Turn to the Discourse. Nor did he ever reflect, with greater Complacency, on his social Hours, then when they tended to glorify the Eternal Majesty; and to awaken, in Himself and others, a more lively Spirit of Devotion.

\* Josh. xxiv. 27.

To





## D E D I C A T I O N.

vii.

To project for the Good of Others, was his frequent *Study*, and to carry those benevolent Contrivances into Execution, his favourite *Employ*. When visited by the young Persons of the Neighbourhood, far from taking an ungraceful Pride to initiate them in a Debauchery, or confirm them in a riotous Habit; it was his incessant Aim, by finely-adapted Persuatives, to encourage them in *Industry*, and establish them in a Course of *Sobriety*; to guard them against the Allurements of Vice, and animate them with the Principles of Piety. A noble Kind of Hospitality this! Which will probably transmit its beneficial Influence, to their earthly Possessions; to their future Families; and even to their everlasting State.

A CONVICTION of human Indigence, and a thorough Persuasion of the Divine All-sufficiency, induced him to be frequent in *Prayer*. To prostrate himself, in profound Adoration, before that infinitely exalted Being, who dwells in Light inaccessible, was his *Glory*; to implore the Continuance of the Almighty Favour, and the Increase of all Christian Graces, was his *Gain*. In those Moments, no doubt, he remembered You, Sir, with a particular Earnestness; and lodged many an ardent Petition in the Court of Heaven, for his Infant Son. Cease not to second them with your own devout Supplications, that they may descend upon  
your

your Head, “ in the Fulness of the Blessings  
“ of the Gospel of Peace.”

To give their genuine Lustre to all his other Endowments, he was careful to maintain an *humble Mind*. Though his Friends might admire his superior Abilities, or his Acquaintance applaud his exemplary Behaviour, he saw how far he *fell short* of the Mark of his high Calling; saw, and lamented his Defects: saw, and renounced Himself: relying, for final Acceptance, and endless Felicity, on a *better Righteousness* than his own; even on the transcendently perfect Righteousness, and inconceivably precious Death, of JESUS the Redeemer. This was the Rock of his Hope, and the very Crown of his Rejoicing.

THESE, Sir, are some of the *distinguishing* Characteristics of your deceased Parent. As you had the Misfortune to lose so valuable a Relative, before you was capable of forming any Acquaintance with his Person; I flatter myself, you will the more attentively observe his Picture. This His *moral Picture*; designed, not to be set in Gold, or sparkle in Enamel, but to breathe in your Spirit, and to live in all your Conduct.—Which, though it be intirely your own, calculated purely for yourself, may possibly (like the Family Pieces in your Parlour, that glance an Eye upon as many as enter the Room) make some *pleasing* and *useful* Impression

pression on every Beholder.—May every one, charmed with the beautiful Image, catch its Resemblance; and Each, in his respective Sphere, “go and do likewise.”

BUT You, Sir, are peculiarly concerned to copy the amiable Original. As the Order of an indulgent Providence, has made you Heir of the *affluent Circumstances*; let not a gay and thoughtless Inadvertence, cut you off from the *richer Inheritance*, of those noble Qualifications.—These will be your Security, amidst all the glittering Dangers; which are inseparable from blooming Years, and an elevated Situation in Life. These are your Path, your sure and only Path, to true Greatness, and solid Happiness.—Tread in these Steps, and you cannot fail to be the Darling of your Friends, and the Favourite of Heaven. Tread in these Steps, and you will give inexpressible Joy to one of the best of Mothers; you will become an extensive Blessing to your Fellow-Creatures; and which, after such most engaging Motives, is scarce worthy to be mentioned, you will be the Delight, the Honour, and the Boast of,

Dear SIR,

Your very affectionate Godfather,

And most faithful humble Servant,

Weston-Favel, near

Northampton,

July 14, 1747.

JAMES HERVEY.



DEDICATION

W R F A C E

We have already extended our gratitude to those on the London and Birmingham



ag. having received from the donors the amount of the loan of the books. The books are now in the hands of the donors and are being used for the purpose of the library. The books are now in the hands of the donors and are being used for the purpose of the library. The books are now in the hands of the donors and are being used for the purpose of the library.

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P R E F A C E.

WE have already exercised our Speculations, on the Tombs and Flowers; surveying Nature, covered with the deepest Horrors, and arrayed in the richest Beauties. *Allegory* taught many of the Objects, to Speak the Language of Virtue; while *Imagination* lent her Colouring, to give the Lessons an engaging Air,—And this with a View of imitating that *Divine* Instructor; who commissioned the *Lily* \*, in her silver Suit, to remonstrate in the Ear of unbelieving Reason: Who sent his Disciples (Men ordained to *teach* the Universe) to *learn* Maxims of the last Importance, from the most *insignificant* Birds \*, that wander through the Paths of the Air; from the very *meanest* Herbs \*, that are scattered over the Face of the † Ground.

VOL. II.

b

Em-

\* \* \* Matt. vi. 26, 28, 29, 30.

† Celebrated Writers, as *Demosthenes* and *Cicero*, *Thucydides* and *Livy*, are observed to have a Style peculiar to themselves.—Now, whoever considers the Discourses of *Christ*, will find Him distinguishing Himself by a Style, which may properly be called *HIS OWN*. Majestic, yet familiar; happily uniting Dignity with

Con-

Emboldened by the kind Acceptance of the preceding Sketches, I beg leave to confide in the same *Benevolence of Taste*, for the Protection and Support of the two remaining Essays; which exhibit a Prospect of *still Life*, and *grand* Condescension; it consists, in teaching his Followers the *sublimest* Truths, by spiritualizing on the most common Occurrences. Which, besides its being level to the lowest Apprehensions: and admirably adapted to steal into the most inattentive Heart; is accompanied with this very singular Advantage, That it turns even the *Sphere of Business* into a *School of Instruction*; and renders the most ordinary Objects a Set of Monitors, ever soliciting our Regard, because ever present to our Senses.—So that, I believe, it may be said of this *amiable Method*, in which our LORD conveyed; as well as of that *powerful Energy*, which attended his Doctrines, That never *Man spake like this Man*.—The *Harvest* approaching, He reminds his Disciples of a far more important Harvest, *John* iv. 35. *Matt.* xiii. 39. when immortal Beings shall be reaped from the Grave, and gathered in from all the Quarters of the Earth: when every human Creature shall sustain the Character of valuable *Wheat*, or despicable *Tares*; and accordingly be lodged in Mansions of everlasting Security, or consigned over to the Rage of unquenchable Fire.—In his Charge to *Fishermen*, when they are commencing Preachers, *Matt.* iv. 19. He exhorts them, conformably to the Nature of their late Occupation, to use the same *Affiduity* and *Address* in winning Souls, as they were wont to exercise in catching the finny Prey.—For the farther Illustration of this no less useful, than curious Subject, I would refer my Reader to a valuable Note, in Sir *Isaac Newton's* Observations on the Prophecies; p. 148. 4to Edition.



*grand Operation* which moralize on the most composed, and most magnificent Appearances of Things.—In which, *Fancy* is again suffered to introduce her Imagery; but only as the Handmaid of *Truth*: in order to dress her Person, and display her Charms; to engage the Attention, and win the Love, even of the *Gay*, and of the *Fashionable*. Which is more likely to be effected, by forming agreeable Pictures of Nature, and deriving instructive Observations; than by the laborious Method of long-deduced Arguments, or close-connected Reasonings.—The Contemplation of the Heavens and the Earth, of their admirable Properties and beneficial Changes, has always afforded the most exalted Gratification to the human Mind. In Compliance with this prevailing Taste, I have drawn my serious Admonitions from the stupendous Theatre, and variegated Scenery, of the Universe. That the Reader may learn his Duty, from his very Pleasures—may gather *Wisdom*, mingled with *Virtue*, from the most refined *Entertainments*, and noblest *Delights*.

The *Evening*, drawing her Sables over the World, and gently darkening into *Night*, is a Season peculiarly proper for sedate Consideration. All Circumstances concur, to hush our Passions, and sooth our Cares; to tempt our

Steps abroad, and prompt our Thoughts to serious Reflection.

— Then is the Time,  
For those, whom Wisdom, and whom Nature  
charm,  
To steal themselves from the degen'rate Croud,  
And soar above this little Scene of Things;  
To tread low-thoughted Vice beneath their Feet;  
To sooth the throbbing Passions into Peace;  
And woo lone Quiet in her silent Walks\*.

The Favour I would solicit for the *first* of the following Compositions, is, That it may be permitted to attend, in such retired and contemplative Excursions. To attend, if not under the Character of a Friend; at least, in the humble Capacity of a Servant, or a Page:—as a *Servant*, to open the Door of Meditation, and remove every Impediment to those best Exercises of the Mind; which blend Advantage with Amusement, and improve, while they delight:—as a *Page*, to gather up the unstable, fluctuating Train of Fancy; and collect her fickle Powers into a consistent, regular, and useful Habit of Thinking.

The *other*, conversant among the *starry Regions*, would lead the Imagination through those beautiful Tracks of unclouded Azure; and point out to the Judgment some of those  
astonish-

\* THOMPS. Autumn, l. 973.

astonishing Particulars, which so eminently signalize the celestial Worlds. A Prospect this, to which Curiosity attracts our Eyes, and to which Scripture itself often directs our Study. A Prospect beyond all others most excellently calculated, to *inlarge* the Soul, and *enoble* its Conceptions;—to give the grandest Apprehensions of the *Everlasting* GOD, and create Sentiments becoming Superiority, with relation to all *transitory* Interests;—in a Word, to furnish *Faith* with the surest Foundation, for a steady Affiance, and true Magnanimity of Spirit; to afford *Piety* the strongest Motives, both for a lively Gratitude, and profound Veneration.

While *Galileo* lifts his Tube, and discovers the prodigious Magnitude of those radiant Orbs;—while *Newton* measures their amazing Distances, and unites the whole System, in harmonious Order, by the Subtle Influences of Attraction:—I would only, like the Herald, before that illustrious *Hebrew* \*, proclaim at every Turn, “ *Bow the Knee*, and adore the “ *Almighty Maker*; magnify his eternal Name, “ *and make his Praise*, like all his Works, to “ *be glorious*.

\* Gen. xli. 43.





CONTEMPLATIONS  
ON THE  
N I G H T.

---

*Night is fair Virtue's immemorial Friend :  
The conscious Moon, through ev'ry distant Age,  
Has held a Lamp to Wisdom.*

Night-Thoughts, No. V.

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inca-

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# CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE NIGHT.

**T**HE Business of the Day dispatched, and the sultry Heats abated, invited me to the Recreation of a Walk. A Walk, in one of the *finest Recesses* of the Country; and in one of the most *pleasant Evenings*, which the Summer-Season produced.

THE Limes and Elms, uniting their Branches over my Head, formed a *verdant Canopy*, and cast a most refreshing Shade. Under my Feet lay a *Carpet* of Nature's *Velvet*; Grass intermingled with Moss, and embroidered with Flowers. Jessamines, in Conjunction with Woodbines, twined around the Trees; displaying their *artless Beauties* to the Eye, and diffusing their *delicious Sweets* through the Air. On either Side, the Boughs, rounded into a Set of regular Arches, opened a View into the *distant Fields*, and presented me with a Prospect



## 2 CONTEMPLATIONS

of the *bending Skies*. The little Birds, all joyous and grateful for the Favours of the Light, were paying their Acknowledgments in a *Tribute of Harmony*, and soothing themselves to Rest with Songs. While a French-Horn, from a neighbouring Seat, sent its melodious Accents, softened by the Length of their Passage, to complete the *Concert* of the *Grove*.

ROVING in this agreeable Manner, my Thoughts were exercised on a Subject, still more agreeable than the Season, or the Scene. I mean, our late *signal Victory*, over the united Forces of intestine Treason, and foreign Invasion. A Victory, which pours Joy through the present Age, and will transmit its Influence to Generations yet unborn.—Are not all the Blessings, which can endear Society, or render Life itself desirable, centered in our present happy Constitution, and auspicious Government? Were they not *all* struck at, by that impious and horrid Blow, meditated at *Rome*; levelled by *France*; and seconded by factious Spirits at *Home*? Who then can be sufficiently thankful, for the gracious Interposition of Providence; which has not only averted the impending Ruin, but turned it with aggravated Confusion, on the Authors of our Troubles?

METHINKS, every Thing *valuable*, which I possess; every Thing *charming*, which I behold;  
conspire



conspire to enhance this ever-memorable Event. To this it is owing, that I can ramble unmolested along the Vale of private Life, and taste all the innocent Satisfactions of a *contemplative Retirement*.—Had Rebellion \* succeeded in her detestable Designs; instead of walking with Security and Complacence in these flowery Paths, I might have met the *Assassin* with his *Dagger*: or have been obliged to abandon my Habitation, and “embrace the Rock for a “Shelter.”—Farewel then, ye fragrant Shades; Seats of Meditation, and calm Repose! I should have been driven from your loved Retreats, to make Way for some barbarous, some *insulting Victor*.—Farewel then, ye pleasing Toils, and wholesome Amusements of my rural Hours! I should no more have reared the tender Flower to the Sun; no more have taught the Espalier to expand her Boughs; nor have fetched, any longer, from my Kitchen-Garden, the purest Supplies of Health.

HAD Rebellion succeeded in her detestable Designs; instead of being regaled with the *Music* of the *Woods*, I might have been alarmed with the sound of the Trumpet, and all the Thunder of War. Instead of being entertained

B 2

with

\* Referring to the Rebellion, set on Foot in the Year 1745.—Which, for several Months, made a very alarming Progress in the North—but was happily extinguished by the glorious and decisive Victory at *Culloden*.

#### 4 CONTEMPLATIONS

with this *beautiful Landscape*, I might have beheld our Houses ransacked, and our Villages plundered; I might have beheld our fenced Cities encompassed with Armies, and our fruitful Fields "cloathed with Desolation;" or have been shocked with the more frightful Images, of "Garments rolled in Blood," and of a Russian's Blade reeking from a Brother's Heart. Instead of Peace, with her chearing Olives, sheltering our Abodes; instead of Justice, with her impartial Scale, securing our Goods; *Persecution* had brandished her Sword, and *Slavery* clanked her Chains.

NOR are these Miseries imaginable only, or the Creatures of a groundless Panic. There are, in a neighbouring Kingdom, who very lately experienced them in all their Rigour\*. And, if the *malignant* Spirit of *Papery* had forced itself into our Church; if an *abjured Pretender*, had cut his Way to our Throne; We could have no Reason to expect a Mitigation of their Severity, on our Behalf.—But, supposing the tender Mercies of a bigotted Usurper, to have been somewhat less cruel.

Where,

\* See a Phamphlet intituled, *Papery always the same*.—Which contains a Narrative of the *Persecutions*, and severe Hardships lately suffered by the *Protestants*, in the Southern Parts of *France*; and closes with a most reasonable, alarming, and spirited Address to the Inhabitants of *Great-Britain*. Printed 1746. Price 8d.

Where, alas! would have been the Encouragement, to cultivate our little Portion; or what Pleasure could arise, from an improved Spot; if both the one and the other lay, every Moment, at the Mercy of *lawless* Power? This imbittering Circumstance would spoil their Relish; and by rendering them a *precarious*, would render them a *joyless* Acquisition.—In vain, might the Vine spread her purple Clusters; in vain, be lavish of her generous Juices; if *Tyranny*, like a ravenous Harpy, should be always hovering over the Bowl, and ready to snatch it from the Lip of Industry, or to wrest it from the Hand of Liberty.

*LIBERTY*, that dearest of Names; and *Property*, that best of Charters; give an additional, an inexpressible Charm, to every delightful Object.—See, how the declining Sun has beautified the *western Clouds*; has arrayed them in Crimson, and skirted them with Gold: Such a Refinement of our domestic Bliss, is Property; such an Improvement of our public Privileges, is Liberty.—When the Lamp of Day shall withdraw his Beams, there will still remain the same Collection of floating Vapours; but O! how changed, how gloomy! The Carnation-Streaks are faded; the golden Edgings are wore away; and all the lovely Tinges are lost, in a *leaden-coloured* *louring* Sadness. Such would be the Aspect, of all these Scenes



## 6 CONTEMPLATIONS

of Beauty, and all these Abodes of Pleasure; if exposed continually to the Caprice of arbitrary Sway, or held in a State of abject and cringing Dependence.

THE Sun has almost finished his daily Race, and hastens to the Goal. He descends lower and lower; till his Chariot-wheels seem to hover on the utmost Verge of the Sky. What is somewhat remarkable, the Orb of Light, upon the Point of setting, grows considerably *broader*. The Shadows of Objects, just before they become blended in undistinguishable Darkness, are exceedingly *lengthened*\*.—Like Blessings, little prized, while *possessed*: but highly esteemed, the very Instant they are Preparing for their Flight: bitterly regretted, when once they are gone, and to be seen no more.

THE radiant Globe is, now, half-immersed beneath the dusky Earth. Or, as the ancient Poets speak, is shooting into the Ocean, and sinks in the western Sea.—And could I view the *Sea*, at this Juncture, it would yield a most amusing and curious Spectacle. The Rays, striking horizontally on the liquid Element, give it the Appearance of floating Glafs; or, reflected in many a different Direction, from a beautiful Multiplicity of Colours.—A Stranger, as he walks along the sandy Beach; and,  
lost

\* *Majoresque cadunt altis de Montibus Umbrae.*



lost in pensive Attention, listens to the Murmurings of the restless Flood; is agreeably alarmed by the *gay Decorations* of the Surface. With Entertainment, and with Wonder, he sees the curling Waves, here glistening with White; there glowing with Purple; in one Place, wearing an azure Tincture; in another, glancing a Cast of undulating Green; in the Whole, exhibiting a Piece of *fluid Scenery*, that may vie with yonder pensil Tapestries, though wrought in the Loom, and tinged with the Dyes of Heaven.

WHILE I am transported by Fancy to the Shores of the Ocean, the great Luminary is sunk beneath the Horizon, and totally disappears. The whole Face of the Ground is overspread with Shades; or with, what one of the finest Painters of Nature calls, a *dun Obscurity*. Only a few very superior Eminences are tipped with streaming Silver. The Tops of Groves, and lofty Towers, catch the *last Smiles* of Day\*; are still irradiated by the departing Beams.— But, O! how transient is the Distinction! how momentary the Gift! Like all the Blessings, which Mortals enjoy below, it is *gone*, almost  
as

\* See this remarkable Appearance delicately described, and wrought into a Comparison, which, in my Opinion, is one of the most just, beautiful, and noble Pieces of Imagery, to be found in modern Poetry; *Night-Thoughts*, No. II. p. 42. 4to Edit.

## 8 CONTEMPLATIONS

as soon as *granted*. See! how languishingly it trembles on the leafy Spire; and glimmers, with a dying Faintness, on the Mountain's Brow. The little Vivacity, that remains, decays every Moment. It can no longer hold its Station. While I speak, it expires; and resigns the World to the gradual Approaches of Night.

————— *Now Twilight grey*  
*Has in her sober Liv'ry all Things clad\*.*

EVERY Object, a little while ago, glared with Light; but now, All appears under a more qualified Lustre. The Animals harmonize with the insensible Creation; and what was *gay* in those, as well as *glittering* in this, gives place to an universal *Gravity*. In the Meadows, all was jocund and sportive: but now the gamesome Lambs, are grown weary of their Frolicks; and the tired Shepherd, has imposed Silence on his Pipe. In the Branches, all was Sprightliness and Song: but now the lively Green, is wrapped in the descending Glooms; and no tuneful Airs are heard, only the plaintive Stock-dove, cooing mournfully through the Grove.—Should I now be vain and trifling, the Heavens and the Earth would rebuke my unseasonable Levity. Therefore, be these Moments devoted to thoughts, *sedate*, as the closing Day; *solmen*, as the Face of Things.

\* MILT. *Par. Lost*, B. IV. l. 598.

Things. And, indeed, however my social Hours are enlivened with innocent Pleasantry; let every Evening, in her sable Habit, toll the Bell to serious Consideration. Nothing can be more proper, for a Person who walks on the Borders of Eternity, and is hasting continually to his final Audit; nothing more proper, than daily to slip away from the Circle of Amusements, and frequently to relinquish the Hurry of Business, in order to consider and adjust "the Things that belong to his Peace."

SINCE the Sun is departed, from whence can it proceed, that I am not involved in pitchy Darkness? Whence these Remainers of *diminished Brightness*? Which, though scarcely forming a Refulgence, soften and sooth the Horrors of Night. I see not the shining Ruler, yet am cheered with a real, though faint Communication of his Splendor.—Does he remember Us, in his Progress through other Climes? Does He send a *Detachment* of his Rays, to *escort* Us during his personal Absence; or to *cover* (if I may use the military Term) our *Retreat* from the Scene of Action? Has he bequeathed Us a Dividend of his Beames, sufficient to render our Circumstances easy, and our Situation agreeable? Till Sleep pours its soft Oppression on the Organs of Sense; till Sleep suspends all the Operations of our Hands; and intirely supersedes any farther Occasion for the Light. No:

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No: it is ill-judged and unreasonable, to ascribe this beneficent Conduct to the Sun. Not unto Him; not unto Him; but unto his *Almighty Maker* We are obliged, for this pleasing Attendant, this valuable Legacy. The gracious Author of our Being, has so disposed the Collection of circumambient Air, as to make it productive of this fine and wonderful Effect. The Sunbeams, falling on the higher Parts of the aerial Fluid, instead of passing on in strait Lines, are bent inwards and conducted to our Sight. Their natural Course is overruled, and they are bidden to wheel about; on purpose to favour Us with a welcome and salutary Visit.—By which Means, the Blessing of Light, and the Season of Business, are considerably prolonged. And, what is a very endearing Circumstance, prolonged most considerably? when the vehement Heats of Summer, incline the *Student* to postpone his Walk, till the temperate Evening prevails; when the important Labours of the Harvest, call the *Husbandman* abroad, before the Day is fully risen.

AFTER all the Ardors of the sultry Day, how reviving is this *Coolness*!—This gives new Verdure to the fading Plants; new Vivacity to the withering Flowers; and a more exquisite Fragrance to their mingled Scents.—By this, the *Air* also receives a new Force, and is qualified



fied to exert itself with greater Activity. Qualified to brace our Limbs; to heave our Lungs; and co-operate, with a brisker Impulse, in perpetuating the Circulation of our Blood.— This I might call the grand *Alembic* of Nature; which distills her most sovereign *Cordial*, the refreshing *Dews*. Incessant Heat, would rob Us of their beneficial Agency; and oblige them to evaporate, in imperceptible Exhalations. Turbulent Winds, or even the gentler Motions of *Aurora's* Fan, would dissipate the rising Vapours, and not suffer them to form a Coalition. But, favoured by the Stillness, and condensed by the Coolness of the Night; they unite in pearly Drops, and create that *finely-tempered* Humidity, which cheers the vegetable World, as Sleep exhilarates the Animal.

NOT unlike to these, are the Advantages of *Solitude*. The World is a troubled Ocean; and who can erect stable Purposes, on its fluctuating Waves? The World is a School of Wrong; and who does not feel Himself warping, to its pernicious Influences \*? On this Sea of Glass†, how insensibly we slide from our own Stedfastness! Some sacred *Truth*, which was struck in lively Characters on our Souls,

\* *Nunquam a turba mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid, ex eo quod composui, turbatur: aliquid, ex his quæ fugavi, redit. Inimica est multorum conversatio.* SENEC.

† Rev. xv. 2.

Souls, is obscured, if not obliterated. Some worthy *Resolution*, which Heaven had wrought in our Breasts, is shaken, if not overthrown. Some inticing *Vanity*, which we had solemnly renounced, again practises its Wiles, and again captivates our Affections. How often has an unwary Glance, kindled a Fever of irregular Desire in our Hearts? How often has a Word of Applause, dropt luscious Poison into our Ears; or some disrespectful Expression, raised a Gust of Passion in our Bosoms? Our Innocence is of so *tender* a Constitution, that it suffers in the promiscuous Croud. Our Purity is of so *delicate* a Complexion, that it scarce touches on the World, without contracting a Stain. We see, we hear, with Peril.

BUT here *Safety* dwells. Every meddling and intrusive Avocation is secluded. Silence holds the Door against the Strife of Tongues, and all the Impertinencies of idle Conversation. The busy Swarm of vain Images, and cajoling Temptations; which beset Us, with a buzzing Importunity, amidst the Gaieties of Life; are chased by these thickening Shades.—Here I may, without Disturbance, commune with my own Heart; and learn that best of Sciences, to *know myself*. Here, the Soul may rally her dissipated Powers, and Grace recover its native Energy.—This is the Opportunity, to rectify every evil Impression; to expel the Poison,  
and

and guard against the Contagion, of corrupting Examples. This is the Place, where I may, with Advantage, apply myself to subdue the *Rebel within*; and be Master, not of a Sceptre, but of myself.—Throng then, ye Ambitious, the Levees of the Powerful; I will be punctual in my Affignations with Solitude. To a Mind intent upon its own Improvement, Solitude has Charms incomparably more engaging, than the *Entertainments* presented in the Theatre; or the *Honours* conferred in the Drawing-Room.

I SAID, Solitude.—Am I then *alone*?—'Tis true, my Acquaintance are at a Distance. I have stole away from Company, and am remote from all *human* Observation.—But that is an alarming Thought,

*Millions of spiritual Creatures walk the Earth,  
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we  
sleep\*.*

PERHAPS, there may be Numbers of those *invisible Beings*, patrolling this same Retreat; and joining with me, in contemplating the Creator's Works. Perhaps, those *ministering Spirits* who rejoice at the Conversion of a Sinner, and hold up the Goings of the Righteous, may follow Us to the lonely Recefs; and, even in our most solitary Moments, be our constant *Attendants*.—What a pleasing Awe is awakened, by

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\* MILT. *Par. Lost*, B. IV. l. 677.

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such a Reflection! How venerable it renders my retired Walks! I am struck with Reverence, as under the Roof of some *sacred Edifice*; or in the *Presence-Chamber* of some mighty Monarch.—O! may I never bring any Pride of Imagination, nor indulge the least dissolute Affection; where such refined and exalted Intelligences exercise their Watch!

'Tis possible, that I am encompassed with such a Cloud of Witnesses; but it is certain, that God, the *infinite eternal* God, is now and ever with me. The great JEHOVAH, before whom all the Angelic Armies bow their Heads, and veil their Faces, surrounds me; supports me; pervades me. "In Him I live, move, and "have my Being."—The whole World is his august Temple; and, in the most sequestered Corner, I appear before his adorable Majesty, no less than when I worship in his House, or kneel at his Altar. In every Place, therefore, let me pay him the Homage of a Heart, cleansed from Idols, and devoted to his Service. In every Circumstance, let me feel no *Ambition*, but to *please* Him; nor covet any *Happiness*, but to *enjoy* Him.

How sublime is the Description, and how striking the Sentiment, in that noble Passage of the Psalms! *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? if I climb up into the Heights of Heaven, Thou*

*art*



art there inthroned in Light. *If I go down to the Depths of the Grave, Thou art there also in thy Pavillion of Darknefs. If I retire to the remotest Eastern Climes, where the Morning first takes Wing: if, swifter than the darting Ray, I pass to the opposite Regions of the West, and remain in the uttermost Parts of the Sea\*:* shall I, in *that* distant Situation, be beyond thy Reach; or, by *this* sudden Transition, escape thy Notice! So far from it; that could I, with one Glance of Thought, transport myself beyond all the Bounds of Creation; I should still be incircled with the Immensity of thy Essence; or rather, still be inclosed in the Hollow of thy Hand.—Awful yet delightful Truth! Let it be interwoven with every Thought! and become one with the very Consciousness of my Existence! That I may continually *walk with GOD*; and conduct myself, in every Step of my Behaviour, “as *seeing HIM that is invisible.*”

THEY are the happy Persons; Felicity, true Felicity, is *all their own*; who live under an habitual Sense of God's Omnipresence, and a sweet Persuasion of his special Love. If Dan-

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\* *Psal. cxxxix. 7, 8, 9.* There is, I think, an additional Strength and Beauty in the Thought; if, with the learned Mr. *Mudge*, we supposed an *Antithesis* between the two Clauses of the last Verse, as there evidently is between those of the preceding; and that they express, in a poetical Stile, the Extremities of the *East* and the *West*.

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gers threaten, their impregnable Defence is at hand. Nothing can be so near to terrify, as their Almighty Guardian to secure them.—To These, the Hours can never be *tedious*; and it is impossible, for them, to be *alone*. Do they step aside from the Occupations of animal Life? A more exalted Set of Employments engage their Attention. They address themselves, in all the various Acts of Devotion, to their heavenly Father; *who now sees in secret, and will hereafter reward them openly*. They spread all their Wants, before his indulgent Eye; and disburden all their Sorrows, into his compassionate Bosom.—Do they withdraw from human Society? They find themselves under the more immediate Regards of their Maker. If they resign the Satisfaction of social Intercourse; it is to cultivate a Correspondence with the condescending DEITY, and taste the Pleasures of Divine Friendship.—What is such a *State*, but the very Suburbs of Heaven? What is such a *Conduct*, but an Antepast of eternal Blessedness?

Now, my Soul, the Day is ended. The Hours are all fled. They are fled to the supreme, Judge, and have given in their Evidence. An Evidence, registered in Heaven! and to be produced, at the great Audit.—Happy *They!* whose Improvement has kept Pace with the fleeting Minutes. Who have seized the important

tant Fugitives; and engaged them in the Pursuit of *Wisdom*, or devoted them to the Service of *Virtue*.

FUGITIVES indeed they are. Our Moments slip away silently and insensibly. The Thief steals not more unperceived from the pillaged House.—And will the Runagates never stop? No: Where-ever we are, however employed, Time pursues his incessant Course. Though we are listless and dilatory; the great Measurer of our Days presses on; still presses on, in his unwearied Career\*; and whirls our Weeks, and Months, and Years away.—Is it not then surprisingly strange, to hear People complain of the *Tediousness* of their Time, and how *heavy* it hangs upon their Hands? To see them contrive a Variety of amusing Artifices, to accelerate its Flight, and get rid of its Burden?—Ah! thoughtless Mortals! Why need you urge the headlong Torrent? Your Days are swifter than a *Post*; which, carrying Dispatches of the last Importance, with unremitted Speed scours the Road. They pass away like the nimble *Ships*; which have the Wind in their Wings, and skim along the watry Plain. They hasten to their destined Period, with the Rapidity of an *Eagle*; which leaves the stormy Blast behind

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Her,

\* *Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile Tempus. VIRG.*

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Her, while She cleaves the Air, and darts upon her Prey\*.

Now the Day is gone, how *short* it appears! When my fond Eye beheld it in *Perspective*, it seemed a very considerable Space. Minutes, crowded upon Minutes; and Hours, ranged behind Hours; exhibited an extensive Draught, and flattered me with a long Progression of Pleasures. But, upon a *retrospective* View, how wonderfully is the Scene altered! The Landscape, large and spacious, which a warm Fancy drew; brought to the Test of cool Experience, shrinks into a Span. Just as the Shores vanish, and Mountains dwindle to a Spot; when the Sailor, surrounded by Skies and Ocean, throws his last Look on his native Land.—How clearly do I now discover the Cheat! May it never impose upon my unwary Imagination again! I find, there is nothing abiding on this Side Eternity. a *long* Duration, in a State of *finite* Existence, is mere Illusion.

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\* *Job ix. 25, 26.* By these Three very expressive Images, the inspired Poet represents the *unintermitted* and *rapid* Flight of Time. The Passage is illustrated with great Judgment, and equal Delicacy, in Dr. Grey's most ingenious Abridgment of *Schultens*.—*Quæ tribus in elementis velocissima, hic admirabili cum emphasi congeruntur. In terris, nil perniciousius cursore, & quidem læti quid ferente. Rapidius tamen adhuc undas, non secant, sed supervolant, navigiola papyro contexta. Omnium rapidissime aerem grandibus alis perimetitur aquila, præcipiti lapsu ruens in prædam.*



PERHAPS, the *Healthy*, and the *Gay*, may not readily credit the serious Truth; especially from a young Pen, and new to its Employ. Let us then refer ourselves to the Decision of the *Antient*. Ask some venerable old Person, who is just marching off the mortal Stage; *How many have been the Days of the Years of thy Life* \*? It was a Monarch's Question; and therefore can want no Recommendation, to the fashionable World.—Observe, how he shakes his hoary Locks, and from a deep-felt Conviction replies; “*Fourscore Years* have finished “their Rounds, to furrow these Cheeks, and “cloath this Head in Snow. Such a Term “may seem long and large, to inconsiderate “Youth. But O! how short, how scanty, to “One that has made the Experiment! *Short*, “as a Gleam of transient Sunshine; *scanty*, as “the Shadow that departeth. Methinks, it was “but Yesterday, that I exchanged my childish “Sports, for manly Exercises; and now, I am “resigning them both, for the Sleep of Death. “As soon as we are *born*, we begin to draw to “our *End*; and how small is the Interval, “between the Cradle and the Tomb!”—O! may we believe this Testimony of mature Age! May every Evening bring it, with clearer Evidence, to our Minds! And may we form such an Estimate of the little Pittance, while it is upon

\* Gen. xlvii. 8. Heb. Bib.

upon the advancing Hand, as we shall certainly make, when the Sands are all run down!

LET me add one Reflection on the *Work* to be *done*, while this Shuttle is flying through the Loom\*. A Work of no small Difficulty, yet of the utmost Consequence!—Hast Thou not seen, hast thou not known, the Excellent of the Earth; who were living Images of their Maker! His *Divine Likeness* was transfused into their Hearts, and beamed forth in all their Conduct. Beamed forth in Meekness of Wisdom, and Purity of Affection; in all the tender Offices of Love, and all the noble Efforts of Zeal. To be stamp'd with the same beautiful Signature, and to be Followers of them, as they were of CHRIST; *this, this* is thy *Business*. On the Accomplishment of this, thy eternal All depends. And, will an Affair of such unspeakable Weight, admit of a Moment's Delay, or consist with the least Remissness?—Especially, since much of thy appointed Time is already elapsed; and the Remainder is *all Uncertainty*, save only that it is in the very Act to fly.—Or suppose, thou hadst made a Covenant with the Grave, and wast assured of reaching the Age of *Methuselah*; how soon would even such a Lease expire!—Extend it, if you please, still farther; and let it be *coexistent*

\* *My Days are swifter than a Weaver's Shuttle.* Job. vii. 6.

*istent* with Nature itself. How inconsiderable is the Addition! For, yet a very little while, and the commissioned Archangel holds up his Hand to Heaven, and swears by the Almighty Name, *That Time shall be no longer* \*. Then, *abused* Opportunities, will never return; and *new* Opportunities, will never more be offered. Then, would negligent Mortals wish—  
with

\* This alludes to the Beginning of *Revelations* the xth; which, abstracted from its spiritual Meaning, and considered only as a stately *Piece of Machinery*, well deserves our Attention; and, I will venture to say, has not its Superior, perhaps not its Equal, in any of the most celebrated Masters of *Greece* and *Rome*.—All that is gloomy or beautiful in the Atmosphere, all that is striking or magnificent in every Element, is taken to heighten the Idea. Yet nothing is disproportionate; but an uniform Air of ineffable Majesty greatens, exalts, ennobles the Whole.—Be pleased to observe the *Aspect* of this august Personage. All the Brightness of the Sun, shines in his Countenance; and all the Rage of the Fire, burns in his Feet.—See his *Apparel*. The Clouds compose his Robe, and the Drapery of the Sky floats upon his Shoulders. The Rainbow forms his Diadem; and that which “compasseth the Heaven with a glorious Circle,” is the Ornament of his Head.—Behold his *Attitude*. One Foot stands on the Ocean, the other rests on the Land. The wide extended Earth, and the World of Waters, serve as Pedestals for those mighty Columns.—Consider the *Action*. His Hand is lifted up to the Height of the Stars. He speaks; and the Regions of the Firmament echo with the mighty Accents, as the midnight Desert resounds with the Lion’s Roar. The Artillery of the Skies is discharged at the Signal;

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wish ever so passionately—for a few Hours—a few Moments only—to be thrown back from the opening Eternity; *Thousands* of Worlds would not be able to procure the Grant.

SHALL I, now, be industrious to shorten, what is no longer than a Span; or to quicken the Pace of what is ever on the Wing? Shall I squander away what is *unutterably important*, while it lasts; and, when once departed, is *altogether irrevocable*! O! my Soul, forbear the Folly; forbear the desperate Extravagance. Wilt thou chide as a Loiterer, the Arrow that boundeth from the String; or sweep away Diamonds, as the Refuse of thy House?—

Throw

a Peal of sevenfold Thunder spreads the Alarm; and prepares the Universe to receive his Orders.—To finish all; and give the highest Grandeur, as well as the utmost Solemnity, to the Representation; hear the *Decree* that issues from his Mouth. He *swears by HIM that liveth for ever and ever*. In whatever Manner, so majestic a Person had expressed Himself; He could not fail of commanding universal Attention. But when he confirms his Speech, by a most sacred and inviolable Oath; we are not only wrapt in silent Suspense, but overwhelmed with the profoundest Awe.—He swears, *That Time shall be no longer*. Was ever Voice so full of Terror; so big with Wonder? It proclaims, not the Fall of Empires, but the final Period of Things. It strikes off the Wheels of Nature; bids Ages and Generations cease to roll; and with one potent Word, consigns a whole World over to Dissolution.—This is one among a Multitude of very sublime and *masterly Strokes*, to be found in that too much neglected Book—the BIBLE.



Throw Time away! Astonishing, ruinous, irreparable Profuseness! Throw Empires away, and be blameless. But O! be parsimonious of thy Days; husband thy precious Hours. They go connected, indissolubly connected, with Heaven or Hell\*. *Improved*, they are a sure Pledge of everlasting Glory; *wasted*, they are a sad Preface to never-ending Confusion and Anguish.

WHAT a *profound Silence* has composed the World! So profound is the Silence, that my very Breath seems a Noise; the Ticking of my Watch is distinctly heard; if I do but stir, it creates a Disturbance.—There is, now, none of that confused Din, from the tumultuous City; No Voice of jovial Rustics, from the neighbouring Meadow: No chirping Melody from the shady Thicket.—Every Lip is sealed. Not the least Whisper, invades the Air; nor the least

\* I remember to have seen upon a Sun-dial in a Physician's Garden at Northampton the following *Inscription*; which, I think, is the most *proper Motto* for the Instrument, that measures our Time; and the most *striking Admonition*, that can possibly be presented to every Eye.

AB HOC MOMENTO PENDET ÆTERNITAS.

The weighty Sense of which, I know not how to express in *English*, more happily than in those Words of Dr. Watts;

Good God! on what a *slender Thread*

[Or, on what a *Moment of Time*]

Hang everlasting Things!

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least Motion, rustles among the Boughs. *Echo* herself sleeps unmolested. The expanded Ear, though all Attention, catches no Sound, but the liquid Lapse of a distant murmuring Stream.

*All Things are hush'd, as Nature's Self lay dead.*

IF, in the midst of this deep and universal Composure, Ten Thousand bellowing Thunders should burst over my Head; and rend the Skies, with their united Volleys; how should I bear so *unexpected a Shock*; It would stun my Senses, and confound my Thoughts. I should shudder in every Limb; perhaps, sink to the Earth with Terror.—Consider then, O Mortals! consider the much more *prodigious* and *amazing* Call, which will, ere long, alarm your sleeping Bones. When the Tenants of the Tomb have slumbered, in the most undisturbed Repose, for a Multitude of Ages; what an inconceivable Consternation must the *Shout* of the *Archangel*, and the *Trump* of *God*, occasion! Will it not wound the Ear of the Ungodly; and affright, even to Distraction, the impenitent Sinner? The stupendous Peal will sound through the Vast of Heaven; will shake the Foundations of Nature; and pierce even the deepest Recesses of the Grave. And how—O! how will the Prisoners of Divine Justice, be able to endure that tremendous

*Sum-*

*Summons*, to a far more tremendous Tribunal? —Do Thou, my Soul, listen to the *still Voice* of the Gospel. Attend, in this thy Day, to the gracious Invitations of thy Saviour. Then, shall that great midnight Cry lose its *Horror*, and be *Music* in thy Ears. It shall be welcome to thy reviving Clay, as the Tidings of Liberty to the Dungeon Captive; as the Year of Jubilee to the harassed Slave. This, this shall be its charming Import; “*Awake, and sing, ye that sleep in Dust*\*.”

WHAT a general *Cessation of Affairs*, has this dusky Hour introduced! A little while ago, all was Hurry, Hurry. Life and Activity exerted themselves in a thousand busy Forms. The City swarmed, with passing and repassing Multitudes. All the Country was Sweat and Dust. The Air floated in perpetual Agitation, by the flitting Birds, and humming Bees. *Art* sat prying with her piercing Eyes; while Industry plied her restless Hands.—But see; how all this fervent, and impetuous Bustle, is fled with the setting Sun. The Beasts are slunk, to their grassy Couch; and the winged People are retired, to their downy Nests. The Hammer has resigned its sounding Task, and the File ceases to repeat its flying Touches. Shut is the well-frequented Shop, and its Threshold no longer worn by the Feet of numerous Cus-

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tomers.

\* Isa. xxvi. 19.

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tomers. The Village-Swain lies drowned in Slumbers; and even his trusty Dog, who, for a considerable Time stood Centry at the Door, is extended at his Ease, and snores with his Master.—In every Place *Toil* reclines her Head, and *Application* folds her Arms. All Interests seem to be forgot; all Pursuits are suspended; all Employment is sunk away; sunk away with those fluttering Myriads, which lately sported in the Sun's departing Rays.—'Tis like the Sabbath of universal Nature; or as though the Pulse of Life stood still.

THUS will it be, with our infinitely momentous Concerns; when once *the Shadows of the Evening*, (that long Evening, which follows the Footsteps of Death!) *are stretched over Us*. The Dead cannot seek unto GOD; the Living, the Living alone, are possessed of this inestimable Opportunity\*. “There is no Work or “Device, no Repentance or Amendment, in “the Grave†, whither We are All hastening.”  
When

\* Behold! Now is the accepted Time. Behold! Now is the Day of Salvation. 2 Cor. vi. 2.

Haste, haste, he lies in wait, He's at the Door,  
Insidious Death! Shou'd his Strong Hand arrest,  
No Composition sets the Pris'ner free.

† They who are gone down to the Grave, are represented (*Isa. xxxviii. 11.*) by a Phrase, which is rendered by *Vitringa*, *Those that inhabit the Land of Intermision or Cessation*.—Which prevents all Appearance



When once that *closing Scene* is advanced, We shall have no other Part to act on this *earthly Theatre*. Then, the Sluggard, who has slumbered away Life in a criminal Inactivity, must lie down in hopeless Distress, and everlasting Sorrow. Then, that awful Doom will take place, "He that is *holy*, let him be holy still; and "he that is *filthy*, let Him be filthy for ever."

Is it so, my Soul? Is this the *only, only* Time allotted, for obtaining the great Reward, and making thy Salvation sure? And art Thou lulled in a *vain Security*; or dreaming in a *supine Inadvertency*? Start, O! start from thy Trance. Gird up the Loins of thy Mind, and

D 2

work

ance of *Tautology* in the Sentence; and is, I think, a valuable *Improvement* of the Translation: as it conveys an Idea, not only distinct from the preceding, but of a very poetical, and very afflicting Nature; such as was perfectly natural for the Royal Singer, and Royal Sufferer to dwell upon, in his desponding Moments.—Thus interpreted the Sense will run; "I *shall see Man no more*; I shall be cut off from the chearful Ways of Men, and all the Sweets of human Society. And, what is a farther Aggravation of the threatened Stroke, I *shall*, by its taking Place, be numbered with *Those, that inherit the Land of Cessation* and Inactivity. Where there will be no more Possibility of contributing to the Happiness of my Kingdom; no more Opportunity of advancing my Creator's Glory; or of making my own final Salvation sure." A Sentiment like *this*, is grand, important, and full of Benevolence; removes all Suspicion of unbecoming *Puillanimity*, and does the highest Honour to the Monarch's Character.

work while it is Day. Improve the present Seed-time, that Eternity may yield a joyful Harvest.—We especially, who are Watchmen in *Israel*, and Ministers of the glorious Gospel; may *We* be awakened, by this Consideration, to all Affiduity in our holy Office. Some or other of *our People*, are ever and anon departing into the invisible State; all *our Friends*, are making incessant Approaches to their long Home; and we *ourselves*, shall very shortly be transmitted to the Confinement of the Tomb. *This* is the favourable Juncture, wherein alone we can contribute to their endless Welfare. This is the Crisis, the all-important *Crisis*, of their final Felicity. Instantly, therefore, let us pour in our wholesome Instructions; instantly, let Us ply them with our earnest Exhortations. A Moment's Delay, may be an irreparable Loss; may be irretrievable Ruin. While we procrastinate, a fatal Stroke may intervene; and place *Us*, beyond the Power of administering; or place *Them*, beyond all Possibility of receiving any spiritual Good\*.

How

\* The Case, represented by the Prophet (1 Kings xx. 40.) seems perfectly applicable on this Occasion. *As thy Servant was busy here and there, He was gone.* So, while we are either *remiss* in our Function, or laying ourselves out upon *inferior* Cares, the People of our Charge may be gone:—gone beyond the Influence of our Counsels; beyond the Reach of our Prayers:—gone into the *unchangeable* and eternal State.

How frequently is the Face of Nature *changed*! and, by changing, made more *agreeable*.—The long-continued Glitter of the Day, renders the soothing Shades of the Evening doubly welcome. Nor does the Morn ever purple the East with so engaging a Lustre, as after the Gloom of a dark and dismal Night.—At present, a *Calm* of Tranquillity is spread through the Universe. The weary Winds have forgot to blow. The gentle Gales have fanned themselves asleep. Not so much as a single Leaf nods. Even the quivering Aspin rests. *And not one Breath curls o're the Stream*.—Sometimes, on the contrary, the *Tempest* summons all the Forces of the Air; and pours itself, with resistless Fury, from the angry North. The whole Atmosphere is tossed into tumultuous Confusion, and the watry World is heaved to the Clouds. The astonished Mariner, and his straining Vessel, now scale the rolling Mountain, and hang dreadfully visible on the broken Surge; now shoot, with headlong Impetuosity, into the yawning Gulf; and neither Hulk, nor Mast, is seen. The Storm sweeps over the Continent: raves along the City-Streets: struggles through the Forest-boughs; and terrifies the savage Nations with a Howl, more wildly horrid than their own. The knotty Oaks bend before the Blast; their iron Trunks groan; and their stubborn Limbs are dashed to the



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Ground. The Lofty Dome rocks; and even the solid Tower totters on its Basis.

SUCH Variations are kindly contrived, and with an evident Condescension to the Fickleness of our Taste. Because, a perpetual Repetition of the *same* Objects, would create Satiety and *Disgust*; therefore, the indulgent Father of our Race has diversified the universal Scene, and bid every Appearance bring with it the Charm of Novelty.--This circumstance is *beneficial*, as well as *entertaining*. Providence, ever gracious to Mortals; ever intent upon promoting our Felicity; has taken Care to mingle, in the Constitution of Things, what is pleasing to our Imagination, with what is servicable to our Interests. The piercing Winds and rugged Aspect of Winter, render the balmy Gales, and flowery Scenes of Spring, peculiarly delightful. At the same Time, the keen Frosts mellow the Soil, and prepare it for the Hand of Industry. The rushing Rains impregnate the Glebe, and fit it to become a Magazine of Plenty. The Earth is a great *Laboratory*; and *December's* Cold collects the gross Materials, which are *sublimated* by the refining Warmth of *May*. The Air is a pure elastic Fluid; and were it always to remain in *this* motionless Serenity, it would lose much of its active Spring; was it never agitated by *those* wholesome Concussions, it would contract a noisome,

per-



perhaps, a pestilential Taint. In which Cases, our Respiration, instead of purifying, would corrupt the vital Juices; instead of supplying Us with Refreshment, would be a Source of Diseases; or every Gasp We draw, might be unavoidable Death\*.—How then should we admire, how should we adore, that happy Union of Benignity and Wisdom; which, from a *Variety* of Dispensations, produces an *Uniformity* of Good! Produces a perpetual Succession of Delights, and an uninterrupted Series of Advantages!

THE *Darkness* is now at its Height; and I cannot but admire the obliging Manner of its taking

\* Considering the immense Quantity of Coals and other combustible Materials which are daily consumed, and evaporate into the Air. Considering the numberless Streams, and Clouds of Smoke, which almost continually overwhelm populous Cities;—the noisome Exhalations, which arise from thronged Infirmarys, and loathsome Jayls; from stagnating Lakes, and putrid Fens—the Variety of offensive and unwholsome Effluvia, which proceed from other Causes;—it is a very remarkable Instance of a Providence, at once tenderly kind, and infinitely powerful, that Mankind is not *suffocated* with Stench; that the Air is not *choaked* with Filth.—The Air is the *common Sewer*, into which ten thousand Times ten thousand Nuisances are incessantly discharged; yet it is preserved so *thoroughly clear*, as to afford the most transparent Medium for Vision; so *delicately undulatory*, as to transmit, with all imaginable Distinctness, every Diversity of Sound; so *perfectly pure*, as to be the constant Refiner of the Fluids, in every Animal that breathes.

### 32 CONTEMPLATIONS

taking place. It comes not with a blunt and abrupt Incivility, but makes gentle and respectful Advances. A *precipitate* Transition, from the Splendors of Day, to all the Horrors of Midnight, would be inconvenient and frightful. It would bewilder the Traveller in his Journey; it would strike the Creation with Amazement; and, perhaps, be pernicious to the Organs of Sight. Therefore the Gloom rushes not upon us instantaneously, but increases by slow Degrees; and, sending *Twilight* before as its *Harbinger*, decently advertises us of its Approach. By this means, we are neither alarmed, nor incommoded, by the Change; but are able to take all suitable and timely Measures, for its Reception.—Thus graciously has Providence regulated, not only the *grand Vicissitudes* of the Seasons, but also the *common interchanges* of Light and Darkness, with an apparent Reference to our Comfort.

Now, the fierce *Inhabitants* of the *Forest* forsake their Dens. A thousand grim Forms, a thousand growling Monsters, pace the Desert. Death is in their Jaws, while stung with Hunger, and athirst for Blood, they roam their nightly Rounds.—Unfortunate the *Traveller*, who is overtaken by the Night, in those dismal Wilds! How must he stand aghast, at the mingled Yell of ravenous Throats, and Lions roaring after their Prey! Defend Him, propitious

ious Heaven! or else He must see his endearing Spouse, and hail his native Home, no more!— Now, the prowling Wolf, like a murderous Ruffian, dogs the Shepherd's Footsteps, and besets his bleating Charge. The Fox, like a crafty Felon, steals to the thatched Cottage, and carries off the feathered Booty.

HAPPY for the World, were these the only Destroyers that walk in Darkness. But, alas! there are Savages in human Shape; who, muffled in Shades, infest the Abodes of civilized Life. The Sons of *Violence* make Choice of this Season\*, to perpetrate the most outrageous Acts of Wrong and Robbery. The *Adulterer* waiteth for the Twilight; and, baser than the Villain on the Highway, betrays the Honour of his Bosom-Friend. Now, *Faction* forms her close Cabals, and whispers her traiterous Insinuations. Now, *Rebellion* plans her accursed Plots, and prepares the Train to blow a Nation into Ruin. Now Crimes, which hide their odious Heads in the Day, haunt the Seats of Society, and stalk through the Gloom with audacious Front. Now, the *Vermin* of the *Stews* crawl from their lurking Holes, to wallow in Sin, and spread Contagion through the Night. Each soothing himself with the fond Notion, That all is safe; That no Eye sees.

ARE

\* — — — When Night

Darkens the Streets, then wander forth the Sons  
Of *Belial*, flown with Insolence and Wine.

MILT.

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ARE They then concealed? Preposterous Madmen! To draw the Curtain between their infamous Practices, and a little Set of Mortals; but lay them open, to all these chaste and *wakeful Eyes* of Heaven\*! As though the Moon and Stars were made, to light Men to their Revels, and not to GOD.—Are they then concealed? No, truly. Was every one of these vigilant Luminaries closed; an Eye *keener* than the Lightning's Flash, an Eye *brighter* than Ten thousand Suns, beholds their every Motion. Their thickest Shades are beaming Day†, to the jealous Inspector, and supreme Judge of human Actions.—Deluded Creatures! have ye not heard, have ye not read, “That Clouds and “Darkness are HIS majestic Residence‡?” In that very Gloom, to which you fly for Covert, he erects his Throne. What you reckon your *Screen*, is the Bar of his Tribunal. O! remember this! Stand in Awe, and sin not. Remember, that the great and terrible God *is about your Path*§, when you take your midnight Range;

\* — — *Sed Luna videt, sed Sidera Testes Intendunt Oculos.*

† This is finely, and very forcibly, expressed by the Psalmist: *If I say, Peradventure the Darkness shall cover me; then shall my Night be turned to Day.* Or, as it may be rendered somewhat more emphatically, *Even the Night shall be broad Daylight all around me.* cxxxix. 10.

‡ Psal xcvi. 2.

§ The original Words are much stronger than the Translation.



is about your Bed, when you indulge the loose Desire; and spies out all your Ways, be they ever so secretly conducted, or artfully disguised.

SOME Minutes ago, a Passenger crossed along the Road. His Horse's Foot struck the Ground, and fetched Fire from a Flint. My Eye, tho' at a Distance, caught the View; and saw, with great Clearness, the transient Sparkles: Of which, had I been ever so near, I should not have discerned the *least Glimpse*, under the Blaze of Day.—So \*, when Sickness has drawn a Veil over the Gaiety of our Hearts; when Misfortunes have eclipsed the Splendor of our out-

Translation; and signify, Thou *sistest* my Path, and art intimately acquainted with all my Ways. The former, I apprehend, denoting the *exact* Cognizance, which the Almighty taketh; the latter implying the *constant* Inspection, which he exerciseth; over all the Circumstances of our Conduct. *Psal. cxxxix. 2.*

\* I beg Leave to inform the young Gentleman, whose Name dignifies my Dedication; That *this* was a Remark of his honoured Father, when we rode together, and conversed in a dusky Evening. I mention this Circumstance, partly, to secure the Paragraph from Contempt; partly to give Him, and the World, an Idea of that eminently serious Taste, which distinguished my deceased Friend.—The *less obvious* the Reflection, the more clearly it discovers a Turn of Mind, remarkably spiritual; which would suffer nothing to escape, without yielding some religious Improvement. The *meaner* the Incident, the more admirable was the Fertility of Imagination; which could deduce the sublimest Truths, from the most trivial Occurrences,

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outward Circumstances; how many *important Convictions* present themselves, with the brightest Evidence! Under the Sunshine of Prosperity, they lay undiscovered; but, when some intervening Cloud has darkened the Scene, they emerge from their Obscurity, and even glitter upon our Minds. Then, the *World*, that delusive Cheat, confesses her Emptiness: but JESUS, the bright and Morning-Star, beams forth with inimitable Lustre. Then, *Vice* loses all her fallacious Allurements; that painted Strumpet is horrible, as the Hags of Hell: but *Virtue*, despised Virtue, gains Loveliness from a lowering Providence, and treads the Shades with more than mortal Charms.—May this reconcile me, and all the *Sons of Sorrow*, to our appointed Share of Suffering! If Tribulation tend to dissipate the inward Darkeness, and pour heavenly Dew upon our Minds; welcome Distress; welcome Disappointment; welcome whatever our froward Flesh, or peevish Passions, would *miscall* Calamities. *These light afflictions, which are but for a Moment*, shall fit easy upon our Spirits; since they befriend our Knowledge; promote our Faith; and so, “*work out for us, a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*\*.”

How

\* 2 Cor. iv. 17. The great *Stephens*, that Oracle of Grecian Learning, translates. *Quo nihil majus dici aut fingi*

How has this Darkness snatched every splendid and graceful Object from my Sight! It has dashed the Sponge over the Pictures of Spring, and destroyed all the *delicate Distinctions* of Things. Where are now the fine Tinges, which so lately charmed me from the glowing Parterre! The Blush is struck out, from the Cheeks of the Rose; and the snowy Hue, is dropt from the Lily. I cast my Eyes toward a magnificent Seat; but the aspiring Columns, and fair-expanded Front, are mingled in rude Confusion. Without the Sun, all the Elegance of the blooming World, is a *mere Blank*; all the Symmetry of Architecture, is a *shapeless Heap*.

Is not this an expressive Emblem of the Loveliness, which the *Sun of Righteousness* transfuses into all that is amiable? Was it not for JESUS.

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*singit potest*. But how deos the Sense rise! How is the Idea enlarged, under *Two* such forcible Expressions! The whole Verse is a Master-piece of the beautiful *Antithesis*, the lively *Description*, and the nervous *Diction*. It is one of those exquisite Passages in the inspired Writings, which, like some rich *aromatic Plants*, cannot be transferred from their own generous and native Soil, without being impaired in their Vivacity, and losing much of their Delicacy. Perhaps, the following Version may be somewhat less injurious to the sacred Original, than the common Translation;—*Our very light Affliction, which is but just for the present Moment, worketh out a far more exceeding, an incomparably great, and eternal Weight of Glory.*

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and his Merits, I should sigh with Anguish of Spirit; even while I rove through Ranks of the most beautiful Flowers, or breathe amidst a Wilderness of Sweets. Was it not for JESUS, and his Merits; I should roam like some *disconsolate Spectre*, even through the Smiles of Creation, and the Caresses of Fortune. My Conversation in this World, though dressed in the most engaging Forms of external Pleasure, would be like the Passage of a *condemned Malefactor*, through enamelled Meadows, and Bowers of Bliss, to be broke upon the Wheel, or to expire on the Rack. But a daily Reflection, on the LAMB'S atoning Blood; a comfortable Trust, that my Soul is reconciled through this divine Expiation; this is the Ray, the golden Ray, which irradiates the Face of the Universe. This is the *Oil of Beauty*, which makes all Things wear a chearful Aspect; and the *Oil of Gladness*, which disposes the Spectator to behold them with Delight\*. This, this is the secret Charm, which teaches Nature, in all her Prospects and all her Productions, so exquisitely to please.

MAN,

\* Thus applied, that fine Piece of *Flattery*, addressed to the *Heathen Emperor*, is strictly and literally true.

———— *Vultus ubi tuus*

*Affulsit populo, gratior it dies,*

*Et soles melius nitent.*

HOR.

Which I would cast in a *Christian Mould*, and thus translate:

When



“MAN goeth forth to his Work, and to “his Labour, till the Evening.” But then his Strength fails; his Spirits flag; and he stands in need, not only of some Respite from Toil, but of some kindly and sovereign Refreshments.—What an admirable Provision for this Purpose, is *Sleep*! Sleep introduces a most welcome Vacation, both for the Soul and Body. The Exercises of the Brain, and the Labours of the Hand, are at once discontinued. So that the *weary* Limbs repair their exhausted Vigour; while the *pensive* Thoughts drop their Load of Sorrows, and the *busy* ones rest from the Fatigue of Application.—Most reviving Cordial! Equally beneficial to our animal and intellectual Powers. It supplies the fleshly Machine, and keeps all its nice Movements in a proper Posture for easy Play. It animates the thinking Faculties with fresh Alacrity, and rekindles their Ardor for the Studies of the Dawn. Without these enlivening Recruits, how soon would the most robust Constitution, be wasted into a *walking Skele-*

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ton;

When Faith presents the Saviour's Death,  
And whispers, “This is thine;”  
Sweetly my rising Hours advance,  
And peacefully decline.

While such my Views, the radiant Sun  
Sheds a more sprightly Ray;  
Each Object smiles; all Nature charms:  
I sing my Cares away.

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*ton*; and the most learned Sage, degenerate into a *hoary Idiot*!—Some Time ago, I beheld, with Surprise, poor *Florio*. His Air was wild; his Countenance meagre; his Thoughts roving, and Speech disconcerted. Inquiring the Cause of this strange Alteration, I was informed, That, for several Nights, he had not closed his Eyes in Sleep. For want of which *noble Restoration*, that sprightly Youth, (who was once the Life of the Discourse, and the Darling of the Company) is become a Spectacle of Misery and Horror.

How many of my Fellow-creatures are, at this very Instant, confined to the Bed of Languishing; and complaining, with that illustrious Sufferer of old, *Wearisome Nights are appointed to me*\*! Instead of indulging soft Repose, they are counting the tedious Hours; telling every striking Clock; or measuring the very Moments, by their throbbing Pulse. How many, harassed with *Pain*, most passionately long to make some little Truce with their Agonies, in peaceful Slumbers! How many, sick with *Disquietude*, and restless even on their downy Pillows, would purchase this transient Oblivion of their Woes, almost at any Rate!—That, which Wealth cannot procure; which Multitudes sigh for in vain; thy God has bestowed on Thee, Times out of Number. The

*welcome*

\* Job. vii. 3.

*welcome Visitant*, punctual at the needed Hour, has entered thy Chamber, and poured his *Poppies* round thy Couch. Has gently closed thy Eye-lids, and shed his slumberous Dews over all thy Senses.

SINCE Sleep is so absolutely necessary; so inestimably valuable; observe, what a *fine Apparatus* Almighty Goodness has made, to accommodate us with the balmy Blessing. With how kind a Precaution, He removes whatever might obstruct its Access, or impede its Influence! He draws around us the *Curtain of Darkness*; which inclines us to a drowsy Indolence, and conceals every Object, that might too strongly agitate the Sense. He conveys *Peace* into our *Apartments*; and imposes Silence, on the whole Creation. Every Animal is bidden to tread softly, or rather to cease from its Motion, when Man is retiring to his Repose.—May we not discern, in this gracious Disposition of Things, the tender Cares of a *Nursing-Mother*; who hushes every Noise, and secludes every Disturbance, when She has laid the Child of her Love to Rest? So, by such soothing Circumstances, and gently-working Opiates, *HE giveth, to his Beloved, Sleep*\*.

ANOTHER signal Instance of a Providence intent upon our Welfare, is, that we are preserved *safe* in the Hours of *Slumber*. How are

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\* Psal. cxxvii. 2.

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we then lost to all Apprehension of Danger; even though the Murderer be at our Bed-side, or his naked Sword at our Breast! Destitute of all Concern for ourselves, we are unable to *think of*, much more to *provide for*, our own Security. At these Moments, therefore, we lie open to innumerable Perils: Perils, from the resistless Rage of Flames: Perils, from the insidious Artifices of Thieves, or the outrageous Violence of Robbers: Perils, from the *irregular Workings*\* of our own Thoughts, and especially from the Incursions of our spiritual Enemy.

WHAT

\* I think it is referable only to a superintending and watchful *Providence*, that We are not hurried into the most *pernicious* Actions, when our Imagination is heated, and our Reason stupefied by Dreams.—We have sometimes heard of unfortunate Persons, who, walking in their Sleep, have thrown themselves headlong from a Window, and been dashed to death on the Pebbles. And whence is it, that such disastrous Accidents are only *related* as Pieces of News, not experienced by Ourselves, or our Families? Were *our* Minds more sober in their Operations, or more circumspect in their Regards? No, verily: Nothing could be more wild, than their Excursions; and None could be more inattentive to their own Welfare. Therefore, if *We have laid Us down, and slept in Peace*; it was, because the LORD vouchsafed Us the sweet Refreshment: if *We rose again in Safety*; it was, *because the LORD sustained Us* with his untemitted Protection.

Will the candid Reader excuse me, if I add a short Story; or rather a *Matter of Fact*, suitable to the preceding



WHAT dreadful Mischief might that restless, that implacable *Adversary* of *Mankind* work, was there not an invisible Hand to controul his Rage, and protect poor Mortals! What Scenes of Horror might he represent to our Imaginations, and "scare us with Dreams, or "terrify us with Visions \*!" But the *Keeper* of *Israel*, who never slumbers nor sleeps, interposes

ceding Remark?—Two Persons, who had been hunting together in the Day, slept together the following Night. One of them was renewing the Pursuit in his Dream; and, having run the whole Circle of the Chase, came, at last, to the Fall of the Stag. Upon this, He cries out with a determined Ardor, *I'll kill him; I'll kill him*: and immediately feels for his Knife, which he carried in his Pocket. His Companion happening to be awake, and observed what passed, leaped from the Bed. Being secure from Danger, and the Moon shining into the Room, He stood to view the Event. When, to his inexpressible Surprise, the infatuated Sportsman gave several deadly Stabs, in the very Place, where, a Moment before, the Throat, and the Life of his Friend lay. —This I mention, as a Proof, that nothing hinders Us, even from being Assassins of *Others*, or Murderers of *Ourselves*, amidst the mad Sallies of Sleep; only the *preventing Care* of our Heavenly Father.

\* What a complete Master that malignant Spirit is, in exhibiting *visionary Representations*, appears from his Conduct towards CHRIST, on the high Mountain: and that he is too ready, if not restrained by an over-ruling Power, to employ his Dexterity in *afflicting Mankind*, is evident from his Treatment of *Job*. See *Luke* iv. 5. *Job* vii. 14.

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poses in our Behalf; at once to *cherish* us under his Wings, and to *defend* us as with a Shield.—It is said of *Solomon*, “That Threescore “ valiant Men were about his Bed; all expert “ in War; every one with his Sword upon his “ Thigh, because of Fear in the Night\*.” But One greater than *Solomon*; One mightier than Myriads of armed Hosts; even the great *JEHOVAH*, in whom is everlasting Strength; He vouchsafes to *encamp about our Houses*; to watch over our sleeping Minutes, and to stop all the Avenues of Ill.—O! the unwearied and condescending Goodness of our Creator! Who *lulls* us to our *Rest*, by bringing on the silent Shades; and *plants* his own ever-watchful Eye as our *Centinel*, while we Enjoy the needful Repose.

*REASON*, now, resigns her sedate Office; and *Fancy*, extravagant *Fancy*, leads the Mind through a Maze of Vanity. The Head is crouded with false Images, and tantalized with the most ridiculous Misapprehensions of Things. Some, are expatiating amidst *Fairy Fields*, and gathering Garlands of visionary Bliss; while their Bodies are stretched on a Wisp of Straw, and sheltered by the Cobwebs of a Barn. Others, quite insensible of their Room of State, are mourning in a doleful *Dungeon*, or struggling with the raging Billows. Perhaps,  
with

\* Cant. iii. 7, 8.

with hasty Steps, they climb the craggy Cliff; and, with real Anxiety, fly from the imaginary Danger. Or else, benumbed with sudden Fear, and finding themselves unable to escape, they give up at once their Hopes, and their Efforts; and, though reclined on a Couch of Ivory, are sinking, all helpless and distressed, in the furious Whirlpool. So unaccountable are the *Vagaries* of the *Brain*, while Sleep maintains its Dominion over the Limbs!

BUT is This the only Season, when absurd incoherent Irregularities play their Magic on our Minds? Are there not those who *dream*, even in their *waking* Moments?—Some pride Themselves in a Notion of superior Excellency, because the Royal Favour has annexed a few splendid Titles to their Names; or because the dying Silkworm has bequeathed her finest Threads, to cover their Nakedness.—Others congratulate their own signal Happiness, because Loads of golden Lumber are amassed together in their Coffers; or promise themselves a most superlative Felicity indeed, when some Thousands more are added to the useless Heap.—Nor are there wanting Others, who gape after *substantial* Satisfaction from *airy* Applause; and flatter themselves with, I know not what, Immortality in the momentary Buz of Renown.—Are any of These a whit more reasonable in their Opinions, than the poor  
ragged

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ragged Wretch in his Reveries; who, while snoaring under a Hedge, exults in the Possession of his stately Palace, and sumptuous Furniture?—If Persons, who are *very Vassals* to their own *domineering* Passions, and led captive by numberless Temptations: if these Persons pique themselves with a Conceit of their Liberty, and fancy themselves the *generous* and *gallant* Spirits of the Age: where is the Difference between Theirs, and the Madman's Frenzy; who, though chained to the Floor, is throned in Thought, and wielding an imaginary Sceptre?—In a Word; as many as borrow their Dignity from a Plume of Feathers, or the gaudy Trappings of Fortune; as many as send their Souls to seek for Bliss in the Blandishments of Sense, or in any Thing short of the divine Favour, and a well-grounded Hope of the incorruptible Inheritance\*; what are they, but Dreamers with their Eyes open; *delirious*, though in *Health*?

WOULD you see their Picture, drawn to the very Life; and the Success of their Schemes, calculated with the utmost Exactness; cast your Eye upon that fine Representation, exhibited by the Prophet: *It shall be even as when a hungry Man dreameth, and behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his Soul is empty: Or as when*

\* These give a sacred, and home-felt Delight,  
A sober Certainty of waking Bliss. MILT. *Camus.*



a thirsty Man dreameth, and behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold, he is faint, and his Soul hath Appetite\*. Such is the Race, and such the Prize, of all those Candidates for Honour and Joy; who run wide from the Mark of the high Calling of GOD, in CHRIST JESUS. They live in Vanity, and die in Woe.—Awaken us, merciful LORD, from these *noon-tide Trances*! awaken us, while Conviction may turn to our Advantage, and not serve only to increase our Torment. O! let our “Eyes be enlightened, to discern the Things that are excellent;” and no longer be imposed upon by fantastic Appearances, which, however *pompous* they may seem, will prove more *empty* than the Visions of the Night, more *transient* than the Dream that is forgotten.

HAVING mentioned Sleep and Dreams, let me once again consider those remarkable Incidents of our Frame: so very remarkable, that I may venture to call them, a kind of experimental *Mystery*, and little less than a standing *Miracle*.—Behold the most *vigorous Constitution*, when stretched on the Bed of Ease, and totally resigned to the Slumbers of the Night. Its Activity is oppressed with Fetters of Indolence; its Strength is consigned over to a temporary Annihilation; the Nerves are like a Bow unstrung, and the whole animal System

is

\* Isa. xxix. 8.

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is like a motionless Log.—Behold a Person of the most *delicate Sensations*; and *amiable Dispositions*. His Eyes, though thrown wide open, admit not the visual Ray; at least, distinguish not objects. His Ears, with the Organs unimpaired, and articulate Accents beating upon the Drum, perceive not the Sound; at least, apprehend not the Meaning. The Senses, and their exquisitely fine Feelings, are overwhelmed with an unaccountable Stupifaction. You call him a *social Creature*; but where are his social Affections? He knows not the Father, that begat him; and takes no Notice of the Friend, that is as his own Soul. The Wife of his Bosom may expire by his Side, and He lie more unconcerned than a Barbarian. The Children of his Body, may be tortured with the severest Pangs; and He, even in the same Chamber, remain untouched with the least Commiseration.—Behold the most *ingenious Scholar*: whose Judgment is piercing, and able to trace the most intricate Difficulties of Science; his Taste refined, and quick to relish all the Beauties of Sentiment and Composition. Yet, at this Juncture, the thinking Faculties are unhinged, and the intellectual Oeconomy quite disconcerted. Instead of close connected Reasonings, nothing but a disjointed Huddle of absurd Ideas: instead of well-digested Principles, nothing but a disorderly Jumble of

crude

crude Conceptions. The most palpable Delusions, impose upon his Imagination. The whole Night passes, and he frequently mistakes it for a single Minute: is not sensible of the Transition, hardly sensible of any Duration.

Yet, no sooner does the Morning dawn, and Day-light enter the Room; but this strange Enchantment vanishes. The Man awakes, and finds himself possessed of all the valuable Endowments, which, for several Hours, were suspended, or lost. His Sinews are braced, and fit for Action. His Senses are alert and keen. The romantic Visionary brightens into the Master of Reason. The frozen or benumbed Affections, melt with Tenderneſs, and glow with Benevolence. And, what is beyond Measure surprising, the intoxicated Mind works itself sober, not by *slow Degrees*; but, in the *Twinkling* of an Eye, recovers from its Perturbation. —Why does not the Stupor, which deadens all the nice Operations of the animal Powers, hold fast its Possession? When the Thoughts are once disadjusted, why are they not always in Confusion? How is it, that they are rallied in a Moment; and, from the wildest Irregularity, reduced to the most orderly Array? — From an Inactivity, resembling Death; how is the Body so *suddenly* restored, to Vigour and Agility? From Extravagancies, bordering upon

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Madness; how is the Understanding *instantaneously* re-established, in Sedateness and Harmony?—Surely, “this is the LORD’s Doing, “and it should be marvellous in our Eyes:” should awaken our Gratitude, and inspire our Praise.

THIS is the Time, in which *Ghosts* are supposed to make their Appearance. Now, the *timorous Imagination* teems with Phantoms, and creates numberless Terrors to itself. Now dreary Forms, in fullen State, stalk along the Gloom; or, swifter than Lightning, glide across the Shades. Now, Voices more than mortal\* are heard from the echoing Vaults, and Groans issue from the hollow Tombs. Now, melancholy Spectres visit the Ruins of antient Monasteries, and frequent the solitary Dwellings of the Dead. They pass and repass, in unsubstantial Images, along the forsaken Galleries; or take their determined Stand, over some lamented Grave.—How often has the School-boy fetched a long Circuit, and trudged many a needless Step, in order to avoid the haunted Church-yard? Or, if Necessity, sad Necessity, has obliged him to cross the Spot; where *human Skulls* are lodged below, and the *baleful Yews* shed supernumerary Horrors above; a thou-

\* *Vox quoque per lucos vulgo exaudita silentes  
Ingens, et sicum lacra modis pallentia miris  
Visa sub obscurum noctis.—*



thousand hideous Stories rush into his Memory. Fear adds Wings to his Feet; he scarce touches the Ground; dares not once look behind him; and blesses his good Fortune, if no frightful Sound purred at his Heels, if no ghastly Shape bolted upon his Sight.

'Tis strange, to observe the excessive Timidity, which possesses many Peoples' Minds, on this *fanciful Occasion*; while they are void of all Concern, on others of the most *tremendous Import*. Those, who are startled, in any dark and lonely Walk, at the *very Apprehension* of a single Spectre; are nevertheless unimpressed at the *sure Prospect*, of entering into a whole World of disembodied Beings. Nay, are without any Emotions of Awe, though they know themselves to be hastening into the Presence of the Great, Infinite, and Eternal Spirit.—Should some pale Messenger from the Regions of the Dead, draw back our Curtains at the Hour of Midnight; and appointing some particular Place, say, as the horrid Apparition to *Brutus*, *I'll meet thee there*\*: I believe the boldest Heart would feel something like a Panic; would seriously think upon the Adventure, and

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be

\* The Story of *Brutus*, and his *evil Genius*, is well known. Nor must it be denied, that the precise Words of the Spectre to the Hero were, *I'll meet thee at Philippi*. But, as this would not answer my Purpose, I was obliged to make [an Alteration, in the Circumstance of *Place*.

be in Pain for the Event. But, when a Voice from Heaven cries, in the awakening Language of the Prophet, *Prepare to meet thy GOD, O Israel*\*; how little is the Warning regarded! How soon is it forgot! Preposterous Stupidity! To be utterly *unconcerned*, where it is the truest Wisdom to take the Alarm; and to be *all Trepidation*, where there is nothing really terrible!—Do Thou, my Soul, remember thy Saviour's Admonition; “*I will forewarn you, whom you shall fear.*” Fear not these imaginary Horrors of the Night. But fear that awful Being; whose Revelation of Himself, though with Expressions of peculiar Mercy, made *Moses*, his favourite Servant, tremble exceedingly. Whose Manifestation, when He appears with Purposes of inexorable Vengeance, will make *mighty Conquerors*; who were familiar with Dangers, and estranged to Dismay; call upon the Mountains to fall on them, and the Rocks to cover them. The Menace of whose majestic Eye, when He comes attended with thousand Thousands of his immortal Hosts, will make the very Heavens cleave asunder, and the Earth flee away.—O! dread HIS Displeasure; secure HIS Favour; and then Thou may'st commit all thy other Anxieties to the Wind. Thou may'st laugh at every other Fear.”

THIS

\* Amos iv. 12.

THIS brings to my Mind a memorable and amazing Occurrence, recorded in the Book of *Job* \*. Which is, I think, no inconsiderable Proof of the *real Existence* of Apparitions †, on some *very extraordinary* Emergencies; while it discountenances those Legions of idle Tales, which Superstition has raised, and Credulity received.

F 3

\* *Job* iv. 12, 14, &c.

† *Is a Proof of the real Existence of Apparitions.*—If the Sense, in which I have always understood this Passage, be true.—*Eliphaz*, I apprehend, was neither in a Trance, nor in a Dream, but perfectly awake.—Though he speaks of Sleep; He speaks of it, as falling not upon *himself*, but upon *other Men*. He does not mention *Dreams*, though *Somnia*, would have suited the Verse, (if the Book be in Metre) altogether as well as *Visiones*.—It could not, surely be a *Wind* as some translate the Word [*ruach*.] Because, the Circumstance of *standing still*, is not so compatible with the Nature of a Wind; and a Wind would have passed *above* Him, all *around* Him, as well as *before* Him. Not to add how low a Remark it is, and how unworthy of a Place in so august a Description, that He *could not discern the Form* of a Wind.—It seems, therefore, to have been a real Spirit; either *Angelical* as were those, which presented themselves to *Abraham* resting at the Door of his Tent, and to *Lot* sitting in the Gate of *Sodom*; or else the Spirit of some *departed Saint*, as in the Case of *Samuel's* Apparition, or the famous Appearance of *Moses* and *Elijah* on the Mount of Transfiguration.—A Spirit assuming some *Veicle*, in order to become visible to the human Eye. Which, accordingly, *Eliphaz* saw, exhibiting itself as an Object of Sight. But saw so obscurely and indistinctly, that He was not able, either to describe its *Aspect*, or to discern *whom* it resembled.

## 54 CONTEMPLATIONS

received. Since it teaches us, that if, at any Time, those Visitants from the unknown World, render themselves perceivable by Mortals, it is not upon any Errand of frivolous Consequence, but, to convey *Intelligences* of the utmost Moment, or to work *Impressions* of the highest Advantage.

'Twas in the *Dead of Night*, All Nature lay shrouded in Darkness. Every Creature was buried in Sleep. The most profound Silence reigned through the Universe. In these solemn Moments, *Eliphaz* alone, all wakeful and solitary, was musing upon sublime and heavenly Subjects.—When, lo! an awful Being, from the invisible Realms, burst into his Apartment\*. *A Spirit passed before his Face*. Astonishment seized the Beholder. His Bones shivered with-  
in

\* I have given this solemn Picture a *modern* Dress, rather for the Sake of Variety and Illustration, than from any Apprehension of improving the admirable Original. Such an Attempt, I am sensible, would be more absurdly vain, than to lacquer Gold, or paint the Diamond. The Description in *Eliphaz's* own Language, is awful and affecting to the last Degree. A *Night-Piece*, dressed in all the Circumstances of the deepest Horror. I question, whether *Shakespeare* himself, though so peculiarly happy for his great Command of terrifying Images, has any Thing superior or comparable to this. The Judges of fine Composition see the masterly Strokes; and, I believe, the most ordinary Reader feels them, chilling his Blood, and awakening Emotions of Dread in his Mind.



in Him; his Flesh trembled all over Him; and the Hair of his Head stood erect with Horror.—Sudden and unexpected, was the Appearance of the Phantom; not such its Departure. *It stood still*, to present itself more fully to his View. It made a solemn Pause, to prepare his Mind for some momentous Message.—After which, a Voice was heard. A Voice, for the Importance of its Meaning, worthy to be had in everlasting Remembrance; for the Solemnity of its Delivery, enough to alarm a Heart of Stone. It spoke; and this was the Purport of its Words;—“ *Shall Man, frail Man, be just before the mighty GOD? Shall even the most accomplished of Mortals be pure in the Sight of his Maker\*? Behold, and consider it attentively. He put no such Trust in his most exalted Servants, as should bespeak them incapable of Defect. And his very An-*”  
 “ *gels*

\* There seems to be a significant and beautiful *Gradation* in the *Hebrew*, which I have endeavoured to preserve, by a Sort of *paraphrastic Version*.—The Reader will observe a *new Turn* given to the Sentiment; preferable, I think, to that which our *English Translation* exhibits. Not, *shall Man be more just than GOD?* But, *shall Man be just before, or in the Sight of GOD?* The Passage, thus rendered, speaks a Truth incomparably more weighty, and needful to be inculcated. A Truth, exactly parallel to that humbling Confession of the Prophet, *We are all as an unclean Thing*; and to that solemn Declaration of the Psalmist, *In thy Sight shall no Man living be justified*.

## 56 CONTEMPLATIONS

“ gets he charged with Folly; as sinking, even  
 “ in the highest Perfection of their Holiness,  
 “ infinitely beneath his transcendent Glories;  
 “ as falling, even in all the Fidelity of their  
 “ Obedience inexpressibly short of the Ho-  
 “ mage due to his adorable Majesty. If ange-  
 “ lic Natures must not presume to justify, either  
 “ Themselves, or their Services, before uncre-  
 “ ated Purity; how much more absurd is such  
 “ a Notion, how much more impious such an  
 “ Attempt, in *Them that dwell in Houses of*  
 “ *Clay*; whose Original is from the Dust, and  
 “ whose State is all Imperfection!”

I would observe from hence, the very singu-  
 lar Necessity of that *Poverty of Spirit*, which in-  
 tirely renounces its own Attainments; and most  
 thankfully submits to the Righteousness of the  
 incarnate GOD.—To inculcate this Lesson, the  
 Son of the Blessed came down from Heaven;  
 and pressed no other Principle, with so repeated  
 an Importunity, on his Hearers. To instil  
 the same Doctrine, the HOLY GHOST touched  
 the

\* It was well worthy of our Observation, says an excel-  
 lent Commentator, “ That no one Sentence uttered by  
 “ our LORD, is so frequently repeated as this; *Who so-*  
 “ *ever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall*  
 “ *humble himself, shall be exalted.*” Which often occurs  
 in the Evangelists; but is never duly accomplished in  
 Us, till We disclaim all Pretension to Merit and Right-  
 eousness of our own, and seek them only in the A-  
 tonement and Obedience of JESUS CHRIST.

the Lips of the Apostles with sacred Eloquence; and made it an eminent Part of their Commission, "to demolish every high Imagination." That no Expedient might be wanting, to give it a deep and lasting Efficacy on the human Mind; a Phantom arises from the Valley of the Shadow of Death, or a Teacher descends from the Habitation of Spirits.—Whatever then we neglect; let us not neglect to cultivate *this Grace*, which has been so variously taught, so powerfully enforced.

HARK! a *doleful Voice*—With sudden Starts, and hideous Screams, it disturbs the Silence of the peaceful Night. 'Tis the *Screech-owl*, sometimes in frantic, sometimes in disconsolate Accents, uttering her Woes\*. She flies the vocal Grove, and shuns the Society of all the feathered Choir. The blooming Gardens, and flowery Meads, have no charms for her. Obscene Shades, ragged Ruins, and Walls overgrown with Ivy, are her favourite Haunts. Above, the mouldering Precipice nods, and threatens a Fall: below, the Toad crawls, or the poisonous Adder hisses. The sprightly Morning, which awakens

\* *Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo*

*Sæpe queri, longasque in fletum ducere voces.*

Thus sung that charming Genius, that Prince of the antient Poets, that most consummate Master of Elegance and Accuracy; all whose *Sentiments* are Nature, whose every *Description* is a Picture, whose whole *Language* is Music.—VIRGIL.

awakens other Animals into Joy, administers no Pleasure to this gloomy Recluse. Even the smiling Face of Day, is her Averſion; and all its lovely Scenes, create nothing but Uneaſineſs.

So, juſt ſo, would it fare with the *Ungodly*; were it poſſible to ſuppoſe their Admiſſion, into the chaſte and bright Abodes of endleſs Felicity. They would find nothing but Diſappointment and Shame, even at the Fountain-Head of Happineſs and Honour.—For how could the Tongue, habituated to *Profaneneſs*, taſte any Delight in the harmonious Adorations of Heaven? How could the Lips, cankered with *Slander*, relish the Raptures of everlaſting Praise? Where would be the Satisfaction of the *vain* Beauty, or the *ſupercilious* Grandee? Since, in the Temple of the Skies, no Incenſe of Flattery would be addreſſed to the former, nor any obſequious Homage paid to the latter.—The ſpotleſs and inconceivable Purity of the Bleſſed God, would *ſlaſh* Confuſion on the laſcivious Eye. The envious Mind, muſt be on a *Rack* of ſelf-tormenting *Paſſions*; to obſerve Millions of happy Beings, ſhining in all the Perfections of Glory, and ſolacing themſelves in the Fulneſs of Joy.—In ſhort; the unſanctified Soul, amidſt holy and triumphant Spirits; even in the refined Regions of Blifs and Immortality; would be like this melan-

choly



choly Bird, *dislodged* from her darksome Retirement, and *imprisoned* under the Beams of Day\*.

THE Voice of this Creature screaming at our Windows, or of the Raven croaking over our Houses, is, they say, a *Token* of approaching *Death*. There are Persons, who would regard such an Incident, with no small Degree of Solicitude. Trivial as it is; it would damp their Spirits, perhaps, break their Rest.—One cannot but wonder, that People should suffer themselves to be affrighted at such *fantastical*, and yet be quite unaffected with *real*, Presages of their Dissolution. Real Presages of this awful

\* I would beg of the Reader to observe, with what *Emphasis* and *Propriety* our LORD touches this important Point, in his memorable Reply to *Nicodemus*. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a Man be born again, He CANNOT enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; q. d. "I* wave the *Authority* of the Supreme Judge, and speak "with the *Condescension* of a Teacher in *Israel*. Though "I might, without being liable to the least Controul, "pass it into a sovereign Decree; That unrenewed "Mortals, who are Slaves to corrupt Appetite, SHALL "NOT enter the Habitations of the Just; I rather "choose to represent it, as a Case *utterly impossible*; and "charge the Calamity, not upon Divine Severity, but "upon human Folly. Such Persons, from the very "Nature of Things, preclude themselves; they incapitate their own Minds; and Contrarieties must "be reconciled, before *They*, in their unregenerate "Condition, can be Partakers of those spiritual and "sublime Delights." *John iii. 3.*

awful Event, address us from every Quarter. What are these *incumbent Glooms*, which overwhelm the World, but a kind of *Pall* provided for Nature; and an Image of that long Night, which will quickly cover the Inhabitants of the whole Earth? What an Affinity has the Sleep\* which will very soon weigh down my drowsy Eye-lids, with that State of intire Cefation, in which all my Senses must be laid aside! The silent Chamber, and the Bed of Slumber, are a very significant Representation of the Land, where all Things are hushed; all Things are forgotten.—What meant that deep *Death-Bell Note*, which, the other Evening, faddened the Air? Laden with heaviest Accents, it struck our Ears, and seemed to knock at the Door of our Hearts. Surely, it brought a Message to surviving Mortals, and thus the Tidings ran: “Mortals, the Destroyer of your Race is on his Way. The last Enemy has begun the Pursuit; and is gaining Ground upon you, every Moment. His Paths are strewed with Heaps of Slain. Even now, his Javelin has laid one of your Neighbours in the Dust; and will soon, very soon, aim the *inevitable Blow* at each of your Lives.”

WE need not go down to the Charnel-House, nor carry our Search into the Repositories of the Dead; in order to find Memorials of our im-

\* *Et Consanguineus Lethi Sopor.*

impending Doom. A Multitude of these Remembrancers are planted in all our Paths, and point the heedless Passenger to their long Home. I can hardly enter a considerable Town, but I meet the funeral Procession, or the Mourners going about the Streets. The *Hatchment* suspended on the Wall, or the *Crape* streaming in the Air, are silent Intimations; that both *Rich* and *Poor* have been emptying their Houses, and replenishing their Sepulchres. I can scarce join in any Conversation, but mention is made of some that are given over by the Physician, and hovering on the Confines of Eternity; of others, that have just dropt their Clay amidst weeping Friends, and are gone to appear before the Judge of all the Earth. There's not a *News-Paper* comes to my Hand, but amidst all its entertaining Narrations, reads several serious *Lectures* of *Mortality*. What else are the repeated Accounts—of Age, worn out by slow-consuming Sickneses—of Youth, dashed to Pieces by some sudden Stroke of Casualty—of Patriots, exchanging their Seats in the Senate, for a Lodging in the Tomb—of Misers, resigning their Breath, and (O relentless Destiny!) leaving their very Riches for others? Even the Vehicles of our Amusement, are Registers of the Deceased; and the Voice of *Fame* seldom sounds, but in Concert with a *Knell*.

THESE Monitors croud every Place; not so much as the Scenes of our Diversion excepted. What are the Decorations of our public Buildings, and the most elegant Furniture of our Parlours; but the Imagery of Death, and Trophies of the Tomb? That marble Bust; and those gilded Pictures; how solemnly they recognize the Fate of others, and speakingly remind us of our own!—I see, I hear, and O! I feel this great Truth. It is interwoven with my Constitution. The frequent Decays of the Structure foretel its final Ruin. What are all the Pains, that have been darted through my Limbs; what every Disease, that has assaulted my Health; but the *advanced Guards* of the Foe? What are the Languors and Weariness, that attend the Labours of each revolving Day; but the more *secret Practices* of the Adversary, slowly undermining the earthly Tabernacle?

AMIDST so many Notices, shall we go on thoughtless and unconcerned? Can none of these Prognostics, which are sure as Oracles, awaken our Attention, and engage our Circumspection? *Noah*, 'tis written, *being warned of GOD, prepared an Ark*. Imitate, my Soul, imitate this excellent Example. Admonished by such a Cloud of Witnesses, be continually putting thyself in a Readiness for the last Change. Let not that Day, of which thou hast so many infallible Signs, come upon thee un-

awares



awares.—Get the *Ivy untwined*, and thy Affections disentangled from this enchanting World; that thou may'st be able to quit it, without Reluctance. Get the dreadful *Hand-writing cancelled*, and all thy Sins blotted out; that thou may'st depart in Peace, and have nothing to fear at the decisive Tribunal. Get, O! get thyself interested in the Redeemer's *Merits*, and transformed into his sacred *Image*; then, shalt Thou be meet for the Inheritance of Saints in Light, and may'st even desire to be dissolved, and to be with CHRIST.

SOMETIMES, in my Evening Walk, I have heard

———*The wakeful Bird*  
Sing darkling, and, in shadiest Covert hid,  
Tune her nocturnal Note\*.

How different the *Airs* of this charming Songster, from those harsh and boding *Outcries*! The little Creature ran through all the Variations of Music; and shewed herself Mistress of every Grace, which constitutes or embellishes Harmony.—Sometimes, she swells a manly Throat, and her Song kindles into Ardor. The Tone is so *bold*, and strikes with such Energy, you would imagine the sprightly Serenader in the very next Thicket. Anon, the Strain languishes, and the mournful Warbler melts into Tenderness. The melancholy Notes just

G 2 steal

\* MILT. *Par. Lost*, B. III. 1, 38.

## 64 CONTEMPLATIONS

steal upon the Shades, and faintly touch your Ear; or, in soft and sadly-pleasing Accents, they seem to die along the distant Vale. Silence is pleased, and Night listens to the trilling Tale.

WHAT an Invitation is this, to slip away from the thronged City! This coy and modest Minstrel, entertains only the *Lovers of Retirement*. Those, who are carousing over their Bowls, or ranting at the riotous Club, lose this Feast of Harmony.—In like manner, the Pleasures of Religion, and the Joy of Reconciliation with God; the Satisfaction arising, from an established Interest in CHRIST, and from the Prospect of a blissful Immortality; these are all lost to the Mind, that is ever *in the Croud*; and dares not, or delights not, to retire into itself.—Are we charmed with the Nightingale's Song? Do we wish to have it nearer, and hear it oftener? Let us seek a renewed Heart, and a resigned Will; a Conscience that whispers Peace, and Passions that are tuned by Grace. Then shall we never want a Melody in our own Breasts, far more *musically pleasing*, than sweet *Philomela's* sweetest Strains.

As different as the Voices of these Birds, are the *Circumstances* of those few Persons, who continue awake.--Some are squandering, Pearls shall I say, or Kingdoms? No; but what is unspeakably more precious, Time. Squandering this inestimable Talent, with the most  
sense.

senseless and wanton Prodigality. Not content with allowing a few *spare Minutes*, for the Purpose of necessary Recreation; they lavish many Hours, devote *whole Nights*; to that idle Diversion of shuffling, ranging, and detaching a Set of painted Pasteboards.—Others, instead of this busy Trifling, act the Part of their own Tormentors. They even piquet themselves \*, and call it Amusement; they are torn by wild Horses, yet term it a Sport. What else is the *Gamester's* Practice? His Mind is stretched on the Tenter-Hooks of anxious Suspense, and agitated by the fiercest Extremes of Hope and Fear? While the Dice are rattling, his Heart is throbbing; his Fortune is tottering; and, possibly, at the very next Throw, the one sinks in the Gulf of Ruin, the other is hurried into the Rage of Distraction.

SOME, snatched from the Bloom of Health, and the Lap of Plenty, are confined to the *Chamber of Sickness*. Where they are constrained, either to plunge into the everlasting World, in an unprepared Condition, or else (sad Alternative!) to think over all the Follies of a heedless Life, and all the Bitterness of approaching Death. The Disease rages; it baffles the Force of Medicine; and urges the reluctant Wretch, to the Brink of the Precipice. While Furies

G 3 rouse

\* Alluding to a very painful Punishment, inflicted on Delinquents among the Soldiery.

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rouse the Conscience, and point at the bottomless Pit below.—Perhaps his *drooping Mother*, deprived long ago of the Husband of her Bosom, and bereft of all her other Offspring; is, even now receiving the Blow which consummates her Calamities\*. In vain, she tries to assuage the Sorrows of a beloved Son; in vain, she attempts, with her tender Offices, to prolong a Life, dearer than her own. He faints in her Arms; he bows his Head; he sinks in Death. Fatal, doubly fatal, that last expiring Pang!

\* This brings to my Mind one of the deepest *Mourning-Places*, extant in the Productions of the Pen. The sacred Historian paints it, in all the Simplicity of Style, yet with all the Strength of Colouring.—When JESUS came nigh to the Gate of the City, behold! there was a dead Man carried out, the only Son of his Mother, and she was a Widow.—What a Gradation is here! How pathetically beautiful! Every fresh Circumstance, widens the Wound; aggravates the Calamity; till the Description is worked up into the most finished Picture of exquisite and inconsolable Distress.—He was a *young Man*: cut off in the Flower of Life, amidst a thousand gay Expectations, and smiling Hopes. A Son; an *only Son*; the afflicted Mother's All. So that none remained to preserve the Name, or perpetuate the Family. What rendered the Case still more deplorable, *She was a Widow*: left entirely desolate; abandoned to her Woes; without any to share in her Sorrows, or to comfort her under the irreparable Loss.—Is not this a fine Sketch of the *Inpassioned and Picturesque*? Who can consider the Narrative, with any Attention; and not feel his Heart penetrated, with a tender Commiseration? *Luke vii. 12.*



Pang! While it dislodges the unwilling Soul, it rends an *only Child*, from the yearning Embraces of a Parent; and tears away the Support of her Age, from a disconsolate Widow.

WHILE *Those* long for a Reprieve; *Others* invite the Stroke. Quite weary of the World, with a restless Impatience, they sigh for Dissolution. Some, pining away under the tedious Decays of an incurable *Consumption*; or gasping for Breath, and almost suffocated, by an Inundation of *dropscal Waters*. On some, a relentless *Cancer* has fastened its envenomed Teeth; and is gnawing them, though in the midst of bodily Vigour, in the midst of pitying Friends, gradually to Death. Others are on a Rack of Agonies, by convulsive Fits of the *Stone*. O! how the Pain writhes their Limbs; how the Sweat bedews their Flesh; and their Eye-balls wildly roll! Methinks, the Night condole with these her distressed Children; and sheds dewy Tears, over their sorrowful Abodes.—But of all Mortals, *They* are the most exquisitely miserable, who groan beneath the Pressure of a *melancholy Mind*; or smart under the Lashes of a *resentful Conscience*. Though robed in Ermine; or covered with Jewels; the State of a Slave chained to the Gallies, or of an Exile condemned to the Mines, is a perfect Paradise compared with theirs.

O!

## 68 CONTEMPLATIONS

O! that the *Votaries of Mirth*; whose Life is a continual Round of Merriment and Whim; would bestow one serious Reflection, on this *Variety* of human *Woes*! It might teach them to be less enamoured with the few languid Sweets; that are thinly scattered through this Vale of Tears, and environed with such a Multitude of ragged Thorns. It might teach them, no longer to dance away their Years, with a giddy *rambling Impulse*; but to aspire, with a determined Aim, after those happy Regions, where Delights, abundant and unembittered, flow.

CAN there be Circumstances, which a Man of Wisdom would more earnestly deprecate, than these several Instances of grievous Tribulation? There are; and, what is very astonishing, they are frequently the Desire and the Choice of Those, who fancy themselves the sole Heirs of Happiness. Those I mean, who are launching out into the Depths of *Extravagance*, and running excessive Lengths of *Riot*: who are prostituting their Reputation, and sacrificing their Peace, to the Gratification of their Lusts; sapping the Foundation of their Health, in Debaucheries; or shipwrecking the Interests of their Families, in their Bowls. And, what is worse, are forfeiting the Joys of an eternal Heaven, for the *sordid* Satisfaction of the Beast; for the *transitory* Sensations of an Hour.

Hour.—Ye Slaves of Appetite, how far am I from envying your gross Sensualities, and voluptuous Revels! Little, ah! little are you sensible; that, while Indulgence showers her Roses, and Luxury diffuses her Odours; they scatter *Poisons* also, and shed unheeded *Bane*\*. Evils, incomparably more malignant, than the Wormwood and Gall of the sharpest Affliction.—Since Death is in the Drunkard's Cup; and worse than Poinards in the Harlot's Embrace; may it ever be the Privilege of the Man whom I love, to go without his Share of these *pestilent Sweets*†!

ABUNDANCE of living Sparks glitter in the Lanes, and twinkle under the Hedges. I suppose, they are the *Glow-worms*; which have lighted their little Lamps, and obtained Leave, through the Absence of the Sun, to play a feeble Beam. A faint Glimmer, just serves to render them perceivable; without tending at all to dissipate the Shades, or making any Amends for the departed Day.—Should some weather-beaten Traveller, dropping with Wet, and shiver-

\* Yes; in the Flow'rs, that wreathe the sparkling Bowl,  
Fell Adders hiss, and pois'nous Serpents roll.

† *Quam suave est suavitatibus istis carere!* Was St. Augustine's pious Exclamation. The Substance of which Mr. Pope has expressed, with more Simplicity, and with no less Dignity.

Count all th' Advantage prosp'rous Vice attains,  
'Tis but what Virtue flies from, and disdains.

shivering with Cold, hover round this *Mimicry* of *Fire*; in order to dry his Garments, and warm his benumbed Limbs. Should some bewildered Traveller, groping for his Way, in a starless Night and trackless Defart; take one of these *languid Tapers*, as a Light to his Feet, and a Lantern to his Paths. How certainly would both the one and the other, be frustrated of their Expectation!—And are *They* more likely to succeed, who, neglecting that sovereign Balm, which distilled from the Cross; apply any *carnal* Diversion, to heal the Anxiety of the Mind? Who, deaf to the infallible Decisions of Revelation; resign themselves over to the erroneous *Conjectures* of *Reason*, in order to find the Way that leadeth unto Life? Or lastly, who have Recourse to the *Froth* of this vain World, for a satisfactory Portion, and a substantial Happiness? Their Conduct is in no Degree wiser; their Disappointment equally sure; and their Miscarriage infinitely more disastrous. To speak in the delicate Language of a sacred Writer, “they sow the Wind, and “will reap the Whirlwind\*.”

To speak more plainly; the Pleasures of the World, which we are *All* so prone to dote upon; and the Powers of fallen Reason, which *Some* are apt to idolize†; are not only vain, but

\* Hof. viii. 7.

† I hope, it will be observed, That I am far from decry.



but treacherous. Not only a *painted Flame*, like these sparkling Animals; but much like those unctuous Exhalations, which arise from the marshy Ground, and often dance before the Eyes of the benighted Way-faring Man. Kindled into a sort of Fire, they personate a Guide, and seem to offer their Service: but, blazing with *delusive Light*, mislead their Follower into hidden Pits, headlong Precipices, and

decrying that noble Faculty of Reason, when exerted in her proper Sphere; when acting in a *deferential Subordination* to the revealed Will of Heaven. While She exercises her Powers, within these appointed Limits, She is unspeakably serviceable; and cannot be too industriously cultivated.—But, when she sets up herself in *proud Contradistinction* to the sacred Oracles; when, all-arrogant and self-sufficient, She says to the Word of Scripture, *I have no Need of Thee*; She is, then, I must be bold to maintain, not only a Glow-worm, but an *Ignis Fatuus*; not only a Bubble, but a Snare.

May not this Remark, with the strictest Propriety; and without the least Limitation; be applied to the *Generality* of our modern Romances, Novels, and theatrical Entertainments? These are commonly calculated, to inflame a wanton Fancy. Or, if conducted with so much Modesty, as not to debauch the Affections; they prevent the Judgment, and bewilder the Taste. By their incredible Adventures; their extravagant Parade of Gallantry; and their Characters, widely different from Truth and Nature; they inspire foolish Conceits: beget idle Expectations: introduce a Disgust of genuine History; and indispose their Admirers, to acquiesce in the *decent Civilities*, or to relish the *sober Satisfactions*, of common Life.

and unfathomable Gulfs. Where, far from his beloved Friends, far from all Hopes of Succour, the unhappy Wanderer is swallowed up, and lost.

Not long ago, we observed a very surprising Appearance in the Western Sky. A prodigious Star took its flaming Route through those Coasts; and trailed, as it passed, a tremendous Length of Fire, almost over half the Heavens. Some, I imagine, viewed the portentous Stranger, with much the same anxious Amazement, as *Belshazzar* beheld the Hand-writing upon the Wall. Some looked upon it as a bloody Flag; hung out by Divine Repentment, over a guilty World. Some read, in its glaring Visage, the Fate of Nations, and the Fall of Kingdoms. To others, it shook, or seemed to shake, *Pestilence* and *War* from its horrid Hair.—For my Part; I am not so superstitious as to regard, what every Astrologer has to prognosticate; upon the Accession of a *Comet*, or the Projection of its huge vapoury Train. Nothing can be more precarious, and unjustifiable, than to draw such Conclusions from such Events: Since they neither are preternatural Effects, nor do they throw the Frame of Things into any

Dis-  
—*Liquida si quando nocte cometa*  
*Sanguinei lugubre rubent.*—VIRG.  
—*Crimenque timendi*  
*Sideris, et terris mutantem regna cometæ.*—LUC.

Disorder. I would rather adore that omnipotent Being, who rolled those stupendous Orbs from his creating Hand; and leads them, by his providential Eye, through unmeasurable Tracts of Æther. Who bids them, now, approach the Sun, and glow with unsufferable Ardors; \* now, retreat to the utmost Bounds of our Planetary System, and make their Entry among other Worlds.

They are harmless Visitants. I acquit them from the Charge of causing, or being accessary to, desolating Plagues. Would to God, there were no other more formidable Indications, of *approaching Judgments, or impending Ruin!* But, alas! when Vice becomes predominant, and Irreligion almost epidemical: when the Sabbaths of a jealous God, are notoriously profaned; and that "Name, which is great, wonderful, and holy," is prostituted to the meanest, or abused to the most execrable Purposes: when the Worship of our great Creator and Preserver is banished, from many of the most *conspicuous Families*; and it is deemed a

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H

Piece

\* "The Comet in the Year 1680, according to Sir Isaac Newton's Computation, was, in its nearest Approach, above 166 Times nearer the Sun than the Earth is. Consequently, its Heat was then 28000 Times greater than that of Summer. So that a Ball of Iron as big as the Earth, heated by it, would hardly become cool in 50000 Years. *DERH. Astro. Theol.* p. 237.

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Piece of rude Impertinence, so much as to mention the gracious Redeemer, in our *genteel Interviews*: when it passes for an elegant Freedom of Behaviour, to ridicule the Mysteries of Christianity; and a Species of refined Conversation, to taint the Air with lascivious Hints: when those, who sit in the *Scorners' Chair*, sin with a high Hand; and many of those, who wear the *Professor's Garb*, are destitute of the Power, and content themselves with the mere Form of Godliness: when such is the State of a Community, there is Reason, too apparent Reason, to be horribly afraid. Such *Phænomena*, abounding in the moral World, are not fanciful, but real Omens. Will not an injured God "be avenged on such a Nation as this?" Will he not be provoked, to "sweep it with the Besom of Destruction\*?"

O! THAT the Inhabitants of *Great-Britain*, would lay these alarming Considerations to Heart! The LORD of Hosts has commanded the Sword of *civil Discord*, to return into its Sheath.

\* *Isa. xiv. 23.* The eternal Sovereign, speaking of *Babylon*, denounces this Threatening, *I will sweep it with the Besom of Destruction.*—What a noble, but dreadful Image, is here! How strongly and awfully portrayed! How pregnant also in its Signification! Intimating the *vile Nature*, and expressing the *total Extirpation* of the wicked People; at the same Time, suggesting the *perfect Ease*, with which the righteous God would execute his intended Vengeance.



Sheath. But have we returned, every one from his *evil Ways*? Are we become a renewed People; devoted to a dying Saviour; and zealous of good Works?—What mean those Peals of Sobs, which burst from the *expiring Cattle*? What mean those melancholy Moans, where the lusty Drovers were wont to low\*? What mean those Arrows of untimely Death, discharged on our innocent and useful Animals?

No Wantonness or Sloth, has vitiated the Blood of these laborious, temperate Creatures. They have contracted no Disease, from unseasonable Indulgences, and inordinate Revelings. The pure Stream is their Drink; the simple Herb their Repast. Neither Care disturbs their Sleep, nor Passion inflames their Breast. Whence then are they visited with such terrible Disorders, as no Prudence can prevent, nor any Medicines heal?—Surely, these Calamities are the Weapons of Divine Displeasure, and manifest Chastisements of an evil Generation†. Surely God, the “God to whom

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“ Ven-

\* If these Papers should be so happy as to outlive their Author; perhaps it may be needful to inform Posterity, that the above mentioned Hints, allude to a most terrible, contagious, and mortal *Distemper*; raging among the *horned Cattle*, in various Parts of the Kingdom.

† *Hinc letis vituli vulgo moriuntur in herbis,  
Et dulces animas plena ad præsepia reddunt!  
Balatu hinc pecorum, et crebris mugilibus amnes,  
Arentesque sonant ripæ, callesque supini.* VIRG.

"Vengeance belongeth," has still a Controversy with our sinful Land. And who can tell, where the Visitation will end? What a Storm may follow these prelude Drops?—O! that we may "hear the Rod, and who hath appointed it! Taught by these *penal Effects* of our Disobedience, we may remove the *accursed Thing*\* from our Tents; our Practices; our Hearts! May we turn from all Ungodliness, before Wrath comes upon us to the uttermost; before Iniquity prove our Ruin!

SOMETIMES, at this Hour, another most remarkable Sight amuses the Curious, and alarms the Vulgar. A Blaze of lambent Meteors is kindled, or some very extraordinary *Lights* are refracted in the Quarters of the *North*.—The Streams of Radiance, like Legions rushing to the Engagement, meet and mingle; insomuch, that the Air seems to be all conflicting Fire. Within a while they start from one another; and, like Legions in precipitate Flight, sweep, each a separate Way, through the Firmament. Now, they are quiescent; anon, they are thrown into a quivering Motion; presently, the whole Horizon is illuminated with the glancing Flames. Sometimes, with an Aspect *awfully ludicrous*, they represent extravagant and antic Vagaries. At other Times, you would suspect, that some invisible Hand was playing off the dumb

\* Joh. vi. 18.

dumb *Artillery* of the Skies; and, by a strange Expedient, giving us the Flash, without the Roar.

THE Villagers gaze at the Spectacle, first with Wonder, then with Horror. A general *Panic* seizes the Country. Every Heart throbs, and every Face is pale. The Crouds that flock together, instead of diminishing, increase the Dread. They catch Contagion, from each other's Looks and Words; while Fear is in every Eye, and every Tongue speaks the Language of Terror. Some see *hideous Shapes*; Armies mixing in fierce Encounter, or Fields swimming with Blood. Some foresee *direful Events*; States overthrown, or mighty Monarchs tottering on their Thrones. Others, scared with still more frightful Apprehensions, think of nothing but the *Day of Doom*. "Sure," says one, the unalterable Hour is struck, and "the End of all Things come.—See, replies "another, how the blasted Stars look wan! "Are not these the Signs of the Son of "Man, coming in the Clouds of Heaven?" "JESUS prepare us (cries a Third, and lifts his "Eyes in Devotion) for the Archangel's "Trump, and the great Tribunal!"

If this *waving Brightness*, which plays innocently over our Heads, be so amazing to Multitudes; what inexpressible Consternation must overwhelm unthinking Mortals, when the

*general Conflagration commences! The Day, the dreadful Day, is approaching; "In the which the Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise", and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat: the Earth also, and all the Works that are therein, shall be burnt up.* That mighty Hand, which once opened the Windows from on High, and broke up the Fountains of the great Deep, will then unlock all the *Magazines of Fire*, and pour a *Second Deluge* upon the Earth. The vengeful Flames, kindled by the Breath of the Almighty, spread them-

\* 2 Pet. iii. 10. I have often thought this Verse an eminent Instance of that Kind of beautiful Writing, in which the very *Sound* bears a Sort of *Significancy*; at least, carries an exact Correspondence with the Sense. The original Expression—*rhoizedon*--is one of the hoardest and deepest Words in Language. Nothing could be more exquisitely adapted to affect the *Ear*, as well as impress the *Imagination*, with the Wreck of Nature, and the Crash of a falling World—I scarce ever read this Clause, but it brings to my Mind that admired Description in MILTON:

— On a sudden open fly,  
With impetuous Recoil, and jarring Sound,  
Th' infernal Doors, and on their Hinges grate  
*Harsh Thunder.* — — Book II. l. 879.

It is a pleasing Employ, and a very laudable Office of true Criticism, to point out these inferior Recommendations of the *Sacred Classics*. Though, I believe, the inspired Writers themselves, amidst all the Elevation and Magnificence of their Divine Ideas, disdained a Terribulous Attention to such little Niceties of Stile.



themselves from the Centre to the Circumference. Nothing can withstand their Impetuosity; nothing can escape their Rage. Universal Desolation attends their Progress. Magnificent Palaces, and solemn Temples, are laid in Ashes. Spacious Cities, and impregnable Towers, are mingled in one smoking Mass. Not only the Productions of *human Art*, but the Works of *Almighty Power*, are Fuel for the devouring Element. The everlasting Mountains melt, like the Snows which cover their Summit. Even vast Oceans, serve only to augment the inconceivable Rapidity and Fury of the Blaze.—O! how shall I, or others, stand undismayed amidst the Glare of a *burning World*; unless the LORD JEHOVAH be our Defence? How shall we be upheld in Security, when the Globe itself is sinking in the *fiery Ruin*; unless the Rock of Ages be our Support?

BEHOLD! a new Spectacle of Wonder! The *Moon* is making her entry on the eastern Sky. See her rising in clouded Majesty! opening, as it were, and asserting her original Commission, to *rule over the Night*. All grand and stately, but somewhat sullied is her Aspect. However, she *brightens*, as she *advances*; and grows clearer, as she climbs higher. Till, at length, her Silver loses all its Dross; she unveils her peerless Light; and becomes “the Beauty of  
“Hea-

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“Heaven, the Glory of the Stars\* ;” delighting every Eye, and chearing the whole World, with the Brightness of her Appearance, and the Softness of her Splendors.—O! thou Queen of the Shades! may it be my Ambition to follow this thy instructive Example! While others are fond to transcribe the Fashions of little Courts, and to mimic Personages of inferior State; be it mine, to imitate thy *improving Purity*! May my Conduct become more unblemished, and my Temper more refined; as I proceed farther and farther, in my probationary Course! May every sordid Desire wear away, and every irregular Appetite be gradually lost; as I make nearer Approaches, to the Celestial Mansions!—Will not this be a comfortable Evidence, that I too shall shine, in my adored Redeemer’s Kingdom? Shine, with a *richer Lustre*, than that which radiates from thy resplendent Orb: shine, with an *unfading Lustre*, when every Ray, that beams from thy bounteous Sphere, is totally extinguished?

THE Day afforded us a Variety of entertaining Sights. These were all withdrawn, at the Accession of Darkness. The Stars, kindly officious, immediately lent us their Aid. This served to *alleviate* the Frown of Night; rather than to *recover* the Objects from their Obscurity.

\* Eccles. xliii. 9.

*Lucidum celi decus.*

rity. A faint Ray, scarcely reflected, and not from the entire Surface of Things, gave the straining Eye a very imperfect Glimpse; such as rather mocked, than satisfied Vision.—Now the Moon is risen, and has collected all her Beams, the Veil is taken off from the Countenance of Nature. I see the recumbent Flocks; I see the green Hedge-rows, though without the feathered Choristers, hopping from Spray to Spray. In short, I see once again the World's great Picture: not indeed in its late lively Colours, but more *delicately shaded*, and arrayed in *softer Charms*\*.

WHAT a majestic Scene is here! Incomparably grand, and exquisitely fine!—The Moon, like an immense crystal Lamp, pendent in the magnificent Cieling of the Heavens. The Stars, like so many thousands of golden Tapers, fixed in their azure Sockets. All pouring their Lustre on spacious Cities, and lofty Mountains; glittering on the Ocean; gleaming on the forest; and opening a Prospect, wide as the Eye can glance, more various than Fancy can paint†.—We are forward to admire the

\* — — Now reigns  
Full orb'd the Moon, and with more pleasing Light  
Shadowy sets off the Face of Things.— MILT.

† As when the Moon, resurgent Lamp of Night,  
O'er Heav'n's clear Azure spreads her sacred Light;

When

the Performances of human Art. A Landscape, elegantly designed, and executed with a masterly Hand; a Piece of Statuary, which seems, amidst all the Recommendations of exact Proportion, and graceful Attitude, to soften into Flesh, and almost breathe with Life;—these little *Imitations* of Nature, we behold with a pleasing Surprise. And shall we be less affected, less delighted, with the inexpressibly noble, and completely finished *Original*!—The ample Dimensions of *Ranelagh's Dome*; the gay Illuminations of *Vaux-Hall Grove*; I should scorn to mention on such an Occasion, were they not the Objects of general Admiration. Shall we be charmed with those puny Essays of finite Ingenuity; and touched with no Transport,

*When not a Breath disturbs the deep Serene,  
And not a Cloud o'ercasts the solemn Scene;  
Around her Throne the vivid Planets roll,  
And Stars unnumber'd gild the glowing Pole;  
O'er the dark Trees a yellower Verdure shed,  
And tip with Silver every Mountain's Head;  
Then shine the Vales; the Rocks in Prospect rise;  
A Flood of Glory bursts from all the Skies;  
The conscious Swains, rejoicing in the Sight,  
Eye the blue Vault, and bless the useful Light.*

*Iliad VIII.*

I transcribe these Lines, because Mr. Pope says, they exhibit, in the Original, the finest *Night-Piece* in Poetry. And, if they are so beautiful in *Homer's Language*; who can suspect their suffering any Disadvantage from the Pen of his admirable *Translator*?



sport, at this stupendous Display of Omnipotent Skill? At the august Grandeur, and shining Stateliness, of the Firmament? which forms an Alcove for ten thousand Worlds, and is ornamented with Myriads of everlasting Luminaries.—Surely, this must betray, not only a total *Want* of Religion; but the most abject *Liuteness* of Mind, and the utmost *Poverty* of *Genius*.

THE Moon, is not barely “an Ornament in “the high Places of the Lord \*;” but of signal *Service* to the Inhabitants of the Earth.—How uncomfortable is deep, pitchy, total Darkeness? especially, in the long Absence of the Winter’s Sun. Welcome therefore, thrice welcome, this auspicious Gift of Providence; to enliven the nocturnal Gloom, and line with Silver the raven-coloured Mantle of Night!--How desirable to have our Summer-Evenings illuminated! That we may be able to tread the dewy Meads, and breathe the delicious Fragrance of our Gardens; especially, when the sultry Heats render it irksome and fatiguing, to walk abroad by Day.—How cheering to the *Shepherd*, the Use of this universal Lantern; as he tends his fleecy Charge, or late consigns them to their hurdled Cots! How comfortable and how advantageous to the *Mariner*, as he ploughs the Midnight Main; to adjust the Tackling, to explore

\* Eccles xliii. 9.

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explore his Way, and, under the Influence of this beaming Sconce, to avoid the fatal Rock! —For these, and other beneficial Purposes, the Hand of the ALMIGHTY has hung the *stately Branch* on high; and filled it with a Splendor, not confined to a single Edifice, or commensurate to a particular Square, but diffusive as the whole Extent of the Hemisphere.

THE most faithful of our inferior Servants, are sometimes tardy in their Office; sometimes negligent of their Duty. But this celestial Attendant is most *exactly punctual*, at all the stated Periods of her Ministration. If we choose to prolong our Journey, after the Sun is gone down; the Moon, during her whole *Increase*, is always ready to act in the Capacity of a Guide. If we are inclined to set out very early in the Morning; the Moon, in her *Decrease* prevents the Dawn, on purpose, to offer her Assistance. And, because it is so pleasant a thing, for the Eyes to behold the Light; the Moon, at her *Full*, by a Course of unintermitted Waiting, gives us, as it were, a double day.—How apparently has the Divine Wisdom interested itself, in providing even for the *pleasurable Accommodation* of Man! How desirous, that He should want no Piece of commodious Furniture; no Kind of delightful Convenience! And, in Prosecution of these benevolent Intentions, has annexed so valuable an Appendage

to

to the terrestrial Globe.—Justly, therefore, does the Psalmist celebrate that admirable Constitution, which ordained *the Moon and the Stars to govern the Night*, as an Instance of rich Goodness and of Mercy which endureth for ever\*.

THE Moon, it is confessed, is *no luminous Body*. All the Brightness, which beautifies her Countenance, is originally in the Sun, and no more than transmissively in her. That glorious Orb is the Parent of Day, and the Palace of Light. From thence, the Morning-Star gilds her Horn†; from thence, the Planetary Circles are crowned with Lustre; and from thence, the Moon derives all her silver Radiance.—It is pleasing to reflect, that such is the Case with the *all-sufficient Redeemer*, and his *dependent People*. We are replenished from his Fulness. What do we possess, which we have not received; and what can we desire, which we may not expect; from that never-failing Source of all Good? He is the Author of our Faith,  
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\* Psal. cxxxvi. 9.

† I might, to justify this Expression, observe, that the Planet *Venus*, commonly called the Morning-Star, is found, by our Telescopes, frequently to appear *horned*; or to have a *Crescent* of Light, somewhat like the Moon, a little before or after her Conjunction. But this would be a Remark, too deep and refined for my Scheme; which proceeds only upon a *superficial Knowledge*, and the most *obvious* Appearances, of Nature.

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and the Former of our Graces. In his unspotted Life, we see the Path; in his meritorious Death, the Price; and in his triumphant Resurrection, the Proof of Bliss and Immortality. If we offend, and fall Seven Times a Day; He is the LORD our *Peace* \*. If we are depraved, and our best Deeds very unworthy; He is the LORD our *Righteousness* †. If we are blind, and even brutish, in heavenly Knowledge; He is the LORD our *Wisdom* ‡: his Word dispels the Shades; his Spirit scatters the intellectual Gloom; his Eye looks our Darkeness into Day. In short, we are nothing, and “CHRIST is All.” Worse than defective in ourselves, “we are *complete* in Him.” So that if we shine, it is with delegated Rays, and with borrowed Light. We act by a Strength, and glory in Merits, not our own.—O! may we be thoroughly sensible of our Dependence on the Saviour! May we constantly imbibe his propitious Beams; and never, by indulging *Unbelief*, or backsliding into *Folly*, withdraw our Souls from his benign Influences! Lest we lose our Comfort, and our Holiness; as the fair Ruler of the Night loses her Splendor, when her Urn is turned from its Fountain §, and receives

\* Judg. vi. 23. † Jer. xxiii. 6. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 30.

§ Alluding to those truly poetical Lines in *Milton*,  
*Hither, as to their Fountain, other Stars*

*Repairing, in their golden Urns draw Light.* Par. Lost.



receives no more Communication of solar Effulgence.

THE Moon is incessantly *varying*, either in her Aspect, or her Stages.—Sometimes, she looks full upon us, and her Visage is all Lustre. Sometimes, she appears in Profile, and shews us only half her enlightened Face. Anon, a radiant Crescent but just adorns her Brow. Soon, it dwindles into a slender Streak. Till, at length, all her Beauty vanishes, and she becomes a beamless Orb.—Sometimes, she rises with the *descending Day*; and begins her Procession, amidst admiring Multitudes. Ere long, she defers her Progress till the *midnight Watches*; and steals unobserved, upon the sleeping World.—Sometimes, she just enters the Edges of the Western *Horizon*, and drops us a ceremonious Visit. Within a while, she sets out on her nightly Tour, from the opposite Regions of the East; traverses the whole *Hemisphere*; and never offers to withdraw, till the more refulgent Partner of her Sway renders her Presence unnecessary.—In a Word; she is, while conversant among us, still waxing or waning, and “never continueth in one Stay.”

SUCH is the Moon; and such are all *sublunary Things*; exposed to perpetual Vicissitudes.—How often, and how soon, have the faint Echoes of *Renown* slept in Silence, or been converted into the Clamours of Obloquy! The

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same Lips, almost with the same Breath, cry Hosanna, and Crucify.—Have not *Riches*, confessed their notorious Treachery, a Thousand and a Thousand Times? Either melting away, like Snow in our Hands, by insensible Degrees; or escaping, like a winged Prisoner from its Cage, with a precipitate Flight.—Have we not known the Bridegroom's *Closet*, an Antechamber to the *Tomb*; and heard the Voice, which so lately pronounced the sparkling Pair Husband and Wife, proclaim an everlasting Divorce; and seal the Decree with that solemn Asseveration, “Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust?”—Our *Friends*, though the Medicine of Life; our *Health*, though the Balm of Nature; are a most precarious Possession. How soon may the first become a Corpse in our Arms; and how easily is the last destroyed in its Vigour!—You have seen, no doubt, a Set of pretty *painted Birds*, perching on your Trees, or sporting in your Meadows. You was pleased with the lovely Visitants, that brought Beauty on their Wings, and Melody in their Throats. But could you insure the *Continuance* of this agreeable Entertainment? No, truly. At the least disturbing Noise, at the least terrifying Appearance, they start from their Seats; they mount the Skies; and are gone in an Instant, are gone for ever. Would you choose to have a Happiness, which bears Date with their Arrival,  
and

and expires at their Departure? If you could not be content with a Portion, enjoyable only through such a *fortuitous Term*, not of Years, but of Moments, O! take up with nothing earthly; set your Affections on Things above, there alone is "no Variableness or Shadow of turning."

*JOB*, is not a more illustrious Pattern of Patience, than an eminent Exemplification of this Remark.—View him in his *private Estate*. He heaps up Silver as the Dust; he washes his Steps in Butter, and the Rock pours him out Rivers of Oil.—View him in his *public Character*. Princes revere his Dignity; the Aged listen to his Wisdom; every Eye beholds him with Delight; every tongue loads him with Blessings.—View him in his *domestic Circumstances*. On one hand, he is defended by a Troop of Sons; on the other, adorned with a Train of Daughters; and on all Sides, surrounded by "a very great Household."—Never was human Felicity so consummate; never was *disastrous Revolution* so sudden. The Lightning, which consumed his Cattle, was not more terrible, and scarce more instantaneous. The joyful Parent is bereft of his Offspring, and his "Children are buried in Death." The Man of Affluence is stript of his Abundance; and he, who was cloathed in Scarlet, embraces the Dunghill. The venerable Patriarch is the

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Derision of Scoundrels; and the late Darling of an indulgent Providence, is become "a Brother to Dragons, a companion of Owls."—Nor need we go back to former Ages, for Proofs of this afflicting Truth. In our Times; in all Times, the Wheel continues the same incessant Whirl. And frequently those, who are triumphing, To-day, in the highest *Elevations* of Joy; To-morrow, are bemoaning the Instability of mortal Affairs, in the very *Depths* of Misery\*.—Amidst so much Fluctuation and Un-

\* I believe, I may venture to apply, what the *Temara* says of the Affairs of the Wicked, to all sublunary Things; as a true Description of their very great *Instability*. Job xxii. 16. rendered by Schultens, *Flumen fissum fundamentum eorum*. *Their Foundation* (or what they reckon their most solid and stable Possession) is a *Flood poured out*.—Which is one of the boldest Images, and most poetical Beauties I ever met with in any Language, sacred or profane. In order to have a tolerable Conception of the Image, and a Taste of its Beauty; you must suppose a *Torrent* of Waters, rushing in broken Cataracts, and with impetuous Rapidity, from a steep and craggy Mountain. Then, imagine to yourself an *Edifice*, built upon the Surge of this rolling Precipice; which has no other Basis, than one of those headlong *whirling Waves*. Was there ever such a Representation of transitory Prosperity, tending, with inconceivable Swiftness, unto Ruin? Yet such is every Form of human Felicity, that is not grounded on JESUS, and Participation of his Merits, who is the *Rock of Ages*; on JESUS, and his Image formed in our Hearts, which is the *Hope of Glory*.



Uncertainty; how wretched is the Condition, which has no Anchor of the Soul, sure and steadfast! May thy Loving-kindness, O God, be our present Treasure; and thy future Glory, our reversionary Inheritance! Then shall our Happiness, not be like the full-orbed Moon, which is "a Light that *decreaseth* in its Perfection;" but like the Sun, when he goeth forth in his Strength, and knoweth no other Change, but that of *shining more* and more unto the perfect Day.

METHINKS, in this ever-varying Sphere, I see a Representation, not only of our temporal Advantages, but also of our *spiritual Accomplishments*. Such, I am sure, is what the kind Partiality of a Friend would call *my Righteousness*: And such, I am apt to suspect\*, is the Righte-

\* I would not be understood, as measuring, in this Respect, *others by myself*; but as taking my Estimate, from the unerring Standard of Scripture. And indeed, proceeding on this Evidence, supported by this Authority, I might have ventured farther than a bare *Suspicion*. For, "there is not a *just Man* upon Earth, that doeth "Good, and *sinneeth not*;" says the Spirit of Inspiration by Solomon (*Eccles. vii. 20.*)—Nay, such is the Purity, and so extensive are the Demands of the Divine Law, that an Apostle makes a still more humbling Acknowledgment; "In *many Things* we offend *All*." (*Jam. iii. 2.*)—And the unerring Teacher, who most thoroughly knew our Frame, directs the most advanced, most established, and most watchful Christians, to pray daily for the Forgiveness of their *daily Trespases*.—To which Testi-

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Righteousness of every Man living. Now we exercise it, in some few Instances; in some little Degrees. Anon, Sin revives, and leads our Souls into a transient, though unwilling Captivity. Now we are *meek*; but soon a ruffling Accident intervenes, and turns our Composure into a fretful Disquietude. Now we are *humble*; soon we reflect upon some inconsiderable or imaginary Superiority over others, and a sudden Elatement swells our Minds. Now, perhaps, we possess a clean Heart, and are warm with holy Love. But O! how easily is the Purity of our Affections sullied; how soon the Fervour of our Gratitude cooled! And is there not something amiss, even in our best Moments? Something to be *ashamed* of, in all we *are*; something to be *repented* of, in all we *do*?

WITH what Gladness, therefore, and adoring Thankfulness, should we “submit to the “Righteousness of our incarnate God;” and  
*receive,*

Testimonies, I beg Leave to add an elegant Passage from the *Canticles*; because, it not only expresses the Sentiment of this Paragraph, but illustrates it by the very same Similitude. *She* (the Church) *is fair as the Moon; clear as the Sun*. Fair as the Moon, the lesser and changeable Light, in her *Sanctification*: Clear as the Sun, the greater and invariable Luminary, in her *Justification*. The inherent Holiness of Believers being imperfect, and subject to many Inequalities; while their imputed Righteousness is every Way complete, and constantly like itself. *Cant.* vi. 10.

receive, as a Divine Gift, what cannot be acquired by Human Works\*!—A Writer, of the first Distinction, and nicest Discernment, stiles the Obedience of our glorious Surety, an *everlasting Righteousness*†. Such as was subject to no Interruption, nor obscured by the least Blemish; but proceeded always in the same uniform Tenor, of the most spotless Perfection. —This Righteousness, in another Sense, answers the Prophet's exalted Description; as its beneficial and sovereign Efficacy knows no End; but lasts through all our Life; lasts in the trying Hour of Death; lasts at the decisive Day of Judgment; lasts through every Generation; and will last to all Eternity.

SOMETIMES, I have seen that resplendent Globe *stript* of her *Radiance*; or, according to the emphatical Language of Scripture, “turned into Blood.” The Earth interposing with its opake Body, intercepted the solar Rays, and cast its own gloomy Shadow on the Moon. The malignant Influence gained upon her sickening Orb; extinguished, more and more, the feeble Remainers of Light; till at length, like one in a *deep Swoon*, no Comeliness was left in her Countenance; she was totally overspread with Darknes. —At this Juncture, what a Multitude of Eyes were gazing upon the rueful Spectacle! Even of those Eyes, which  
disre-

\* Rom. v. 17.—x. 3.

† Dan. ix. 24,

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disregarded the Empress of the Night; or beheld her with Indifference; when robed in Glory, and riding in her triumphal Chariot, she shed a softer Day through the Nations. But now, under these Circumstances of Disgrace, they watch her Motions with the most *prying Attention*. In every Place, her Misfortune is the Object of general Observation; and the prevailing Topic of Discourse, in every Company.

Is it not thus, with regard to *Persons of Eminence*, in their respective Spheres! Kings, at the Head of their Subjects; Nobles, surrounded with their Dependents; and (after Names of so much Grandeur, may I be allowed to add?) Ministers labouring among their People\*; are each in a conspicuous Station. Their Conduct in its *minuteſt* Step, especially in any *Miscarriage*, will be narrowly, surveyed and critically scanned. Can there be a louder Call, to ponder the Paths of their Feet, and to be particularly jealous over all their Ways?—Those, who move in inferior Life, may grossly offend; and little Alarm be given; perhaps, no Notice taken. But it is not to be expected, that the least Slip in their Carriage, the least Flaw in their Character, will pass undiscovered. *Malice*, with her Eagle-Eyes, will be sure to discern them; while *Censure*, with her shrill Trumpet, will be

\* *Ye are the Light of the World. A City that is set on a Hill, cannot be hid.* Matth. v. 14.



be as far from concealing them; as *Calumny*, with her treacherous Whispers, from extenuating them. A Planet may sink below the Horizon; or a Star, for several Months, withdraw its Shining; and scarce one in ten Thousand perceive the Loss. But, if the Moon suffers a transient Eclipse, almost half the World are Spectators of her Dishonour.

VERY different was the Case, when, at this late Hour, I have taken a solitary Walk on the *Western Cliffs*. At the Foot of the steep Mountain, the Sea, all clear and smooth, spread itself into an immense Plan, and held a watery Mirror to the Skies. Infinite Heights above, the Firmament stretched its azure Expanse; bespangled with unnumbered Stars, and adorned with the Moon, "walking in Brightness\*." She seemed to contemplate herself, with a peculiar Pleasure; while the *transparent Surface*, both received, and returned her *silver Image*. Here, instead of being covered with Sack-cloth, she shone with double Lustre; or rather with a Lustre multiplied, in proportion to the Number of Beholders, and their various Situations.

SUCH, methinks, is the Effect of an exemplary Behaviour, in Persons of exalted Rank. Their Course, as it is nobly distinguished, so it will be happily *influential*. Others will catch the diffusive Ray; and be ambitious to resemble

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\* Job xxxi. 26.

a Pattern, so attracting; so commanding. Their amiable Qualities, will not terminate in themselves; but we shall see them *reflected* from their Families; their Acquaintance; their Retainers. Just as we may now behold another Moon; trembling \* in the Stream; glittering in the Canal; and displaying its lovely Impress, on every Collection of Waters.

THE Moon, Philosophers say, is a sort of *Sovereign* over the great *Deep*. Her Orb, like a Royal Sceptre, sways the Ocean, and actuates the fluid Realms. It swells the Tides, and perpetuates the reciprocal Returns of Ebb and Flow. By which Means, the liquid Element purges off its Filth; and is preserved, from being putrefied itself, and from poisoning the World.—Is the Moon thus *operative* on the vast Abyss? And shall not the Faith of eternal and infinite Delights to come, be equally efficacious on this Soul of mine?—Far above her argent Fields, are Treasures of *Happiness*, unseen by mortal Eye; by mortal Ear unheard; and unconceived by any human Imagination. In that desirable World, the most distinguished and exalted *Honours* also are conferred; in Comparison with which, the Thrones and Diadems of earthly Monarchs, are empty Pageants, and childish Toys.—Yonder Arch of Sapphire, with all its Spangles of Gold, is but

\* *Splendet tremulo sub Lumine Pontus.*

the Floor of these Divine Abodes. What then are the Apartments; what is the Palace? How bright with Glories; how rich with Bliss?

O! YE Mansions of Blessedness; ye Beauties of my Father's Kingdom; which far outshine these Lamps of the visible Heaven; transmit your sweet and winning Invitations to my Heart. *Attract* and *refine*, all my Affections. Withdraw them from *stagnating*, on the sordid Shores of Flesh; never suffer them to settle, upon the impure Lees of Sense: but impress them with *Emotions* of restless Desire, after sublime and celestial Joys.—Joys, that will proceed, still proceed in a copious and everlasting Flow, when Seas shall cease to roll:—Joys, that will charm every Faculty with unimaginable Pleasure; when the Moon, with her waxing Splendors, shall chear our Sight no more.

ENOUGH for the present Evening. My Thoughts have been sufficiently exercised, and my Steps begin to be attended with Weariness. Let me obey the Admonition of Nature; and give Respite to my Meditations, Slumber to my Eyes.—But stay.—Shall I retire to the Bed of Sleep, with as little Ceremony, and with as much Inattention, as the Brutes to their sordid Lair? Are no *Acknowledgments* due to that Divine Being, who is the Support of my Life, and the Length of my Days? Have I no farther

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Need of his *protecting* Care; no more Occasion for the Blessings of his Goodness?—*Lepidus*, perhaps, may laugh at the bended Knee; and have a thousand Darts of Raillery, ready to discharge on the Practice of Devotion. The Wits, I know, are unmercifully severe on, what *they* call, the Drudgery of Prayer, and the fantastical Rant of Praise. These they leave to the illiterate Labourer, and the mean Mechanic; or treat them, with a contemptuous Sneer, as the Parson's ignoble Trade.

Is it then an Instance of *superstitious* Blindness, to distinguish; or of *whimsical* Zeal, to celebrate; the most supereminent Excellency and Merit? Is it an *ungraceful* Business; or does it argue a *groveling* Disposition; to magnify Goodness, transcendently rich and diffusive?—What can be so truly becoming a *dependent State*, as to pay our adoring Homage, to the Author of all Perfection; and profess our devoted Allegiance, to the supreme almighty Governor of the Universe?—Can any thing more significantly bespeak an *ingenuous Temper*; or administer a more real Satisfaction to its finest Feelings; than the Exercises of penitential Devotion? By which we give Vent to an honest Anguish; or melt into filial Sorrow; for our Insensibility to the best of Friends, for our Disobedience to the best of Parents?—In a Word; can there be a more *sublime Pleasure*,  
than



than to dwell, in fixed Contemplation, on the Beauties of the Eternal Mind; the amiable Original of all that is fair, grand, and harmonious; the beneficent Giver of all that is convenient, comfortable, and useful?—Can there be a more *advantageous Employ* than to present our Requests to the Father of Mercies; opening our Minds to the Irradiations of his Wisdom, and all the Faculties of our Souls to the Communications of his Grace?—It is strange, unaccountably strange, that the Notion of *Dignity* in Sentiment, and the Pursuit of *refined* Enjoyment, should ever be disunited from Devotion. That Persons, who make Pretensions to an improved Taste, and exalted Genius, should neglect this most ennobling Intercourse, with the wisest and best of Beings; the inexhaustible Source of Honour and Joy.

SHALL I be deterred, from approaching this Source of the purest Delight? Deterred, from pursuing this highest Improvement of my Nature? Deterred from all, by a *formidable* Banter; or confuted, by one *irrefragable* Smile?—No: let the Moon, in her resplendent Sphere; and yonder Pole, with all its starry Train; witness, if I be silent Even or Morn. If I refrain to kindle in my Heart, and breathe from my Lips, the reasonable Incense of Praise. Praise to that great and glorious God, who formed the Earth, and built the Skies; who poured

from his Hand the watery World, and shed the  
 all-surrounding Air abroad.—“Thou also  
 “madest the Night, Maker Omnipotent! and  
 “Thou, the Day! Which I, though less  
 “than the least of all thy Mercies, have passed  
 “in Safety, Tranquillity, and Comfort.—  
 “When I was lost in the Extravagance of  
 “Dreams, or lay immersed in the Insensibility  
 “of Sleep; thy Hand recovered me from the  
 “temporary Lethargy.—Thy Hand set a new,  
 “a delicately fine Edge, on all my blunted  
 “Senses; and strung my Sinews with recruit-  
 “ed Vigour. When my Thoughts were be-  
 “numbed and stupefied, thy quickening In-  
 “fluence roused them into Activity; when they  
 “were disconcerted and wild, thy regulating  
 “Influence reduced them into Order. Refit-  
 “ting me at once, to relish the innocent Enter-  
 “tainments of an *animal*, and to enjoy the  
 “sublime Gratifications of a *rational* Capacity.  
 “—When Darkness covered the Creation, at  
 “thy Command, the *Sun* arose; painted the  
 “Flowers, and distinguished every Object;  
 “gave Light to my Feet, and gave Nature,  
 “with all her beautiful Scenes, to my Eye.—  
 “To Thee, O Thou God of my Strength, I  
 “owe the *Continuance* of my Being, and the  
 “*Vivacity* of my Constitution. By thy sacred  
 “Order, without any Consciousness of mine,  
 “the Wheels of Life move, and the crimson  
 “Foun-

" Fountain plays. *Over-ruled* by thy exquisite  
 " Skill, it transforms itself, by the nicest Opera-  
 " tions of an inexplicable kind of Chemistry,  
 " into a Variety of the finest Secretions. Which  
 " glide into the Muscles, and swell them for  
 " Action; or pour themselves into the Fluids,  
 " and repair their incessant Decays. Which  
 " cause Chearfulness to sparkle in the Eye,  
 " and Health to bloom in the Cheek.

" *DISASTROUS* Accidents, injurious to  
 " the Peace of my Mind; or fatal to the Wel-  
 " fare of my Body; beset my Paths. But thy  
 " Faithfulness and Truth, like an impenetrable  
 " Shield, guarded me all around. Under this  
 " Divine Protection, I walked secure, amidst  
 " Legions of *apparent* Perils; and passed un-  
 " hurt, through a far greater Multiplicity of *un-*  
 " *seen* Evils. Not one of my Bones was broken;  
 " not a single Shaft grazed upon my Ease;  
 " even when the Eye that watched over me,  
 " saw, in its wide Survey, *Thousands falling*  
 " *beside me*, in irrecoverable Ruin; and *ten*  
 " *Thousands* deeply wounded, *on my Right-*  
 " *hand*.—If Sickness has, at any Time, sadden-  
 " ed my Chamber, or Pain harrowed my  
 " Flesh; it was a *wholsome* Discipline, and a  
 " *gracious* Severity. The Chastisement proved  
 " a sovereign Medicine, to cure me of an im-  
 " moderate Fondness, for this imperfect trouble-  
 " some State; and to quicken my Desires, after

“ the unimbittered Enjoyments of my eternal  
 “ Home.—Has not thy Munificence, unwea-  
 “ ried and unbounded, spread my *Table*; and  
 “ furnished it, with the finest Wheat; re-  
 “ plenished it, with Marrow and Fatness?  
 “ While Temperance sweetened the Bowl;  
 “ Appetite seasoned the Dish; Contentment and  
 “ Gratitude crowned the Repast.—Has not  
 “ thy Kindness, O God of the Families of  
 “ *Israel*, preserved my affectionate *Relations*;  
 “ who study, by their tender Offices, to soften  
 “ every Care, and heighten every Joy? Has not  
 “ thy Kindness given me valuable *Friends*;  
 “ whose Presence is a Cordial, to chear me in  
 “ a dejected Hour; and whose Conversation,  
 “ mingles Improvement with Delight?  
 “ WHEN Sin lay disguised amidst flowery  
 “ Scenes of Pleasure; enlightened by thy Wis-  
 “ dom, I *discerned* the latent Mischief; made  
 “ resolute by thy Grace, I *shunned* the luscious  
 “ Bane. If, through the Impulse of Sensuality,  
 “ or the Violence of Passion, I have been hur-  
 “ ried into the Snare, and stung by the Ser-  
 “ pent; thy faithful Admonitions, have *recalled*  
 “ the foolish Wanderer; while the Blood of thy  
 “ Son, has *healed* his deadly Wounds.—Some,  
 “ no Doubt, have been cut off in the Midst of  
 “ their Iniquities; and transmitted, from the  
 “ Thrillings of polluted Joy, to the Agonies of  
 “ eternal Despair. Whereas, I have been di-  
 “ stinguished



“stinguished by long-suffering Mercy; and, in-  
“stead of lifting up my Eyes in Torments, to  
“behold a Heaven irrecoverably lost; I may  
“lift them up under the pleasing Views of being  
“admitted, ere long, into those Abodes of end-  
“less Felicity.—In the mean Time, Thou hast  
“vouchsafed me the *Revelation* of thy Will;  
“the Influences of thy *Spirit*; and Abundance  
“of the most effectual *Aids*, for advancing in  
“Knowledge, and growing in Godliness: for  
“becoming more conformable to thy Image,  
“and more meet for thy Presence: for tasting  
“the Pleasures of Religion, and securing the  
“Riches of Eternity.

“How various is thy Beneficence, O Thou  
“Lover of Souls! It has unsealed a thousand  
“Sources of Good; opened a thousand Avenues  
“of Delight; and heaped Blessings upon me,  
“with a ceaseless Liberality. If I should at-  
“tempt to declare them; they would be more  
“than the *starry* Host, which glitter in this un-  
“clouded Sky; more than the *dewy* Gems,  
“which will adorn the Face of the Morning.

“AND shall I *forget* the GOD of my Salva-  
“tion, the Author of all my Mercies? Rather  
“let my Pulse forget to beat!—Shall I render  
“Him *no* Expressions of Thankfulness? Then  
“might all Nature reproach my Ingrati-  
“tude.—Shall I rest satisfied with the *bare* Ac-  
“knowledgment of my Lips? No: let my  
“Life

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" Life be vocal, and speak his Praise, in that  
 " only genuine, that most emphatical Lan-  
 " guage.—the Language of devout Obedience.  
 " Let the *Bill* be drawn upon my very Heart;  
 " let all my Affections *acknowledge* the Draught;  
 " and let the whole Tenor of my Actions, in  
 " Time and through Eternity, be continually  
 " *paying* the Debt—the ever-pleasing, ever-  
 " growing Debt of Duty, Veneration, and  
 " Love.

" AND can I, O Thou Guide of my Goings,  
 " and Guardian of all my Interests—can I *di-*  
 " *trust* such signal, such experienced Goodness?  
 " *Thou hast been my Helper*, thro' all the busy  
 " Scenes of Day: *therefore, under the Shadow*  
 " *of thy Wings* will I repose myself during the  
 " Darkness, the Danger, and Death-like Inac-  
 " tivity of the Night. Whatever Defilement I  
 " have contracted, wash it thoroughly away,  
 " in redeeming Blood; and let neither the  
 " sinful Stain, nor the sinful Inclination, ac-  
 " company me to my Couch!—Then, shall  
 " *I lay me down in Peace, and take my Rest*;  
 " cheerfully referring it to thy all-wise Deter-  
 " mination, whether I shall open my Eyes in  
 " *this* World, or awake in the unknown Re-  
 " gions of *another*."

CONTEMPLATIONS  
ON THE  
STARRY HEAVENS.

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*There dwells a noble Pathos in the Skies,  
Which warms the Passions, proselytes our Hearts:  
How eloquently shines the glowing Pole!  
With what Authority it gives its Charge,  
Remonstrating great Truths in Stile sublime!*  
Night-Thoughts, No. IX.

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## CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

## STARRY HEAVENS.

THIS Evening, I exchange the nice Retreats of Art, for the noble Theatre of Nature. Instead of measuring my Steps, under the *Covert* of an Arbour; let me range along the *Summit*, of this gently rising Hill.—There is no Need of the leafy Shade, since the Sun has quitted the Horizon, and withdrawn his scorching Beams. But see, how Advantages and Inconveniencies are usually linked, and chequer our Affairs below! If the *annoying Heat* ceases, the *Landscape*, and its pleasing Scenes, are also removed.—The majestic Castle, and the lowly Cottage, are vanished together. I have lost the aspiring Mountain, and its russet Brow; I look round, but to no Purpose, for the humble Vale, and its flowery Lap. The Plains whitened with Flocks, and the Heath yellow with Furze, disappear. The advancing Night,  
has

has wrapt in Darkness the long extended Forest; and drawn her Mantle, over the Windings of the silver Stream. I no longer behold that luxuriant Fertility in the Fields; that wild Magnificence of Prospect, and endless Variety of Images; which have so often touched me with Delight, and struck me with Awe, from this commanding Eminence.

THE Loss, however, is scarcely to be regretted; since it is amply compensated, by the opening Beauties of the Sky. Here I enjoy a free View of the whole Hemisphere; without any Obstacle from below, to confine the exploring Eye; or any Cloud from above, to overcast the spacious Concave. 'Tis true; the lively Vermilion, which so lately streaked the Chambers of the West, is all faded. But the *Planets*, one after another, light up their Lamps; the *Stars* advance in their glittering Train; a Thousand and a Thousand Luminaries, shine forth in successive Splendors; and the whole Firmament is kindling into the most beautiful Glow. The Blueness of the *Æther*, heightened by the Season of the Year, and still more enlivened by the *Absence* of the *Moon*, gives those Gems of Heaven the strongest Lustre. ONE Pleasure more, the invading Gloom has not been able to snatch, from my Sense. The Night rather improves, than destroys, the Fragrance which exhales from the *blooming Beans*.

With

With these, the Sides of this sloping Declivity are lined; and with these, the balmy Zephyrs perfume their Wings. Does *Arabia*, from all her spicy Groves, breathe a more liberal, or a more charming Gale of Sweets? And what is a peculiar Recommendation of the rural Entertainments, presented in our happy Land, they are alloyed by no Apprehensions of Danger. No poisonous Serpent, lurks under the Blossom; nor any ravenous Beast, lies ready to start from the Thicket.—But, I wander from a far more exalted Subject. My Thoughts, like my Affections, are too easily diverted from the Heavens, and detained by inferior Objects. Away, my Attention, from these little Blandishments of the Earth; since all the *Glories* of the *Sky* invite thy Regard.

WE have taken a Turn among the *Tombs*, and viewed the solemn Memorials of the Dead: in order to learn the Vanity of mortal Things, and to break their soft Incantment.—We have surveyed the *Ornaments* of the *Garden*; not that the Heart might be planted in the Parterre, or take Root among the flowery Race: but that these Delicacies of a Day, might teach us to aspire after a better Paradise; where Beauty never fades, and Delight is ever in the Bloom.—A Third Time we lighted the Candle of Meditation; and sought for Wisdom, not in the crouded City, or wrangling Schools,

but in the silent and lonely *Walks* of antient *Night*\*.—Let us once more indulge the contemplative Vein, and raise our Speculations to those *sublimier Works* of the great Creator; which the Regions of the Sky contain, and this dusky Hour unveilst†.

IF we have discerned the Touches of his Pencil, glowing in the Colours of Spring; if we have seen a Sample of his Beneficence, exhibited in the Stores of Nature; and a Ray of his Brightness, beaming in the Blaze of Day; what an infinitely richer Field for the Display of his Perfections, are the Heavens! The *Heavens*, in the most emphatical Manner, declare the Glory of God. The Heavens are nobly eloquent of the Deity, and the most magnificent Heralds of their Maker's Praise. They speak to the whole Universe; for there is neither Speech so *barbarous*, but their Language is understood; nor Nation so *distant*, but their Voices are heard among them‡.—Let me then, in this solemn Season, formed for Thought, and a calm Intercourse with Heaven; let me listen to their silent Lectures. Perhaps, I may

\* Referring to the several Subjects of the Three preceding Essays.

† Night opes the *noblest Scenes*, and sheds an Awe, Which gives those venerable Scenes full Weight, And deep Reception in th'entender'd Heart.

*Night-Thoughts*, No. IX.

‡ Plal. xix. 3.



receive such impressive Manifestations of "the eternal Power and Godhead," as may shed Religion on my Soul, while I walk the solitary Shades; and may be a tutelary *Friend* to my *Virtue*, when the Call of Business, and the Return of Light, expose me again to the Inroads of Temptation.

THE *Israelites*, instigated by Frenzy rather than Devotion, worshipped the Host of Heaven. And the Pretenders to *judicial Astrology* talk of, I know not what, mysterious Efficacy; in the different Aspect of the Stars, or the various Conjunction and Opposition of the Planets.—Let those, who are unacquainted with the sure Word of Revelation, give ear to these Sons of Delusion, and Dealers in Deceit. For my Part, it is a Question of Indifference to me, whether the Constellations shone with Smiles, or frowned in Frowns, on the Hour of my Nativity. Let CHRIST be my Guard; and, secure in such a Protection, I would laugh at their impotent Menaces. Let CHRIST be my *Guide*; and I shall scorn to ask, as well as despair of receiving, any predictory Information from such senseless Masses.—What! shall "the Living seek to the Dead\*?" Can these Bodies advertise me of future Events, which are unconscious of their own Existence? Shall I have Recourse to dull unintelligent Matter, when I may apply

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to

\* Isa. viii. 19.

to that all-wise Being; who, with one comprehensive Glance, distinctly views whatever is lodged in the Bosom of Immenfity, or forming in the Womb of Futurity?—Never, never will I search for any Intimations of my *Fate*; but often trace my Creator's *Footsteps*\*, in yonder starry Plains. In the former Case, they would be Teachers of Lyes; in the latter, they are Oracles of Truth. In this therefore, this Sense only, I profess myself the Pupil of the Stars.

THE Vulgar, are apprehensive of nothing more, than a Multitude of *bright Spangles*, dropt over the æthereal Blue. They have

\* "It is most becoming (says a great Author) such imperfect Creatures as we are, to contemplate the Works of God, with *this* Design, that we may discern the Manifestations of Wisdom in them; and thereby excite in ourselves those devout Affections, and that superlative Respect, which is the very Essence of Praise, as it is a reasonable and moral Service." ABERNETHY on the Attributes.—And, indeed, if we are sincerely disposed to employ ourselves in this excellent, this delightful Duty of praising the infinite Creator; the *Means*, and the *Motives*, are both at hand. His Works, in a wonderful and instructive Variety, present themselves; with pregnant Manifestations, of the most transcendent Excellencies of their Maker. They pour their Evidence from all Quarters, and into all the Avenues of the Mind. They invite us, especially in the magnificent System of the Universe, to contemplate—*Counsel*, consummately wise; and *Execution*, inimitably perfect;—*Power*, to which nothing is impossible; and *Goodness*, which extendeth to All, which endureth for ever.—To give, not a full Display, but only some *slight Strictures*, of these glorious Truths, is the principal Scope of the following Remarks.

no higher Notion of these fine Appearances, than that they are so many *golden Studs*, with which the Empyrean Arch is decorated. — But studious Minds, that carry a more accurate and strict Inquiry among the celestial Bodies, bring back Advices of a most astonishing Import. Let me just recollect the most material of those *stupendous Discoveries*; in order to furnish our proper Subjects for Contemplation. And let the Unlearned remember, That the Scene I am going to display, is the Workmanship of that incomprehensible God, who is “perfect in Knowledge, and mighty in Power.” Whose Name, whose Nature, and all whose Operations, are “great and marvellous.” Who summons into Being, with equal Ease, a single Grain, or ten thousand Worlds. — To this if we continually advert, the Assertions, though they will certainly excite our *Admiration*, need not transcend our Belief.

THE Earth is, in Fact, a round Body; however it may seem, in some Parts, to be sunk into Vales, and raised into Hills\*;

## L 3

Parts,

\* A learned Writer, I think, Dr. *Derham*, has somewhere an Observation to this Purpose — That the loftiest *Summits* of Hills, and the most enormous *Ridges* of Mountains, are no real Objection to the globular or round Form of the Earth. Because, however they may render it, to our limited Sight, vastly uneven and protuberant; yet, they bear no more Proportion to the *intire* Surface of the terraqueous Ball, than a *Particulate* of Dust, ca-

sually



Parts, to be spread into a spacious Plain, extending to the Confines of the Heavens, or terminated by the Waters of the Ocean.—We may fancy, that it has deep Foundations, and rests upon some prodigiously solid Basis. But it is *pendent*, in the wide transpicious Æther; without any visible Cause, to uphold it from above, or support it from beneath.—It may seem to be sedentary in its Attitude, and motionless in its Situation. But it is continually *sailing*\*, thro' the Depths of the Sky; and in the Space of Twelve Months, finishes the mighty Voyage. Which periodical Rotation, produces the Seasons, and compleats the Year.—As it proceeds in the annual Circuit, it *spins* upon its own *Centre*; and turns its Sides alternately to the Fountain of Light. By which means, the *Day* dawns in one Hemisphere; while the Night succeeds in the other. Without this Expedient, one Part of its Regions would  
 fuallly dropt on the Mathematician's Globe, bears to its whole Circumference. Consequently the rotund Figure is no more destroyed in the former Case, than in the latter.—On the same Principle, I have not thought it necessary, to take any Notice of the comparatively small Difference, between the *Polar* and *Equatorial* Diameter of the Earth.

\* With what amazing *Speed*, this Vessel (if I may carry on the Allusion), filled with a Multitude of Nations, and freighted with all their Possessions, makes her Way through the ethereal Space.



would, during half the great Revolution, be scorched with excessive Heat, or languish under an unintermitted Glare; while the other, exposed to the contrary Extremes, would be frozen to Ice, and buried under a long Opposition of dismal and destructive Darkness.

I CANNOT forbear taking Notice; that, in this compound Motion of the Earth, the one never *interferes* with the other, but both are perfectly *compatible*. Is it not thus, with the Precepts of Religion, and the needful Affairs of the present Life; not excepting even the innocent Gratifications of our Appetites?—Some, I believe, are apt to imagine, that they must renounce Society, if they devote themselves to CHRIST; and abandon all the Satisfaction of *this* World, if they once become zealous Candidates for the Felicity of *another*.—But this is a very mistaken Notion, or else a very injurious Representation, of the Doctrine which is according to Godliness. It was never intended to drive Men into Desarts; but to lead them, through the peaceful and pleasant Paths of Wisdom, into the blissful Regions of Life eternal. It was never intended to strike off the Wheels of Business, or cut in sunder the Sinews of Industry; but rather, to make Men industrious from a Principle of *Conscience*, not from the Instigations of *Avarice*; that so, they may promote their immortal Happiness, even while

while they provide for their temporal Maintenance. It has no Design to extirpate our Passions, but only to restrain their Irregularities; neither would it extinguish the Delights of Sense, but prevent them from evaporating into Vanity, and subsiding into Gall. A Person may be cheerful among his Friends, and yet joyful in GOD. He may taste the Sweets of his earthly Estate; and, at the same Time, cherish his Hopes of a nobler Inheritance in Heaven. The *Trader* may prosecute the Demands of Commerce, without neglecting to negotiate the Affairs of his Salvation. The *Warrior* may wear his Sword; may draw, in a just Cause, that murderous Weapon; yet be a good Soldier of JESUS CHRIST, and obtain the Crown that fadeth not away. The *Parent* may lay up a competent Portion for his Children, and not forfeit his Title to the Treasures, either of Grace or of Glory.—So far is Christianity, from obstructing any valuable Interest, or with-holding any real Pleasure; that it improves the one, and advances the other. Just as the diurnal and annual Motions, are so far from *clashing*, that they intirely *accord*; and instead of being destructive of each other, by mutually blending their Effects, they give Proportion and Harmony to Time, Fertility and innumerable Benefits to Nature.

To Us, who dwell on its Surface, the Earth

is

is by far the *most extensive* Orb, that our Eyes can, any-where, behold. It is also cloathed with Verdure; distinguished by Trees; and adorned with a Variety of beautiful Decorations. Whereas, to a Spectator placed on one of the Planets, it wears an uniform Aspect; looks all luminous, and *no larger* than a Spot. To Beings, who dwell at still greater Distances, it intirely disappears.—That which we call, alternately, the Morning and the Evening-Star; as in one Part of her Orbit, she rides foremost in the Procession of Night; in the other, ushers in and anticipates the Dawn; is a *planetary World*. Which, with the four others, that so wonderfully vary their mystic Dance, are in themselves dark Bodies, and shine only by Reflexion: have Fields, and Seas, and Skies of their own: and furnished with all Accommodations for *animal* Subsistence, and are supposed to be the Abodes of *intellectual* Life. All which, together with this our earthly Habitation, are dependent on that grand Dispenser of divine Munificence, the Sun; receive their Light from the Distribution of his Rays, and derive their Comforts from his benign Agency.

**THE Sun**, which seems to perform its daily Stages through the Sky, is, in this respect\*, *fixed*

\* I say, *in this respect*; that I may not seem to forget, or exclude, the Revolution of the Sun round its own Axis.

*fixed* and immoveable. 'Tis the great Axle of Heaven, about which the Globe we inhabit, and other more spacious Orbs, Wheel their stated Courfes.—The Sun, though seemingly *smaller* than the *Dial* it illuminates, is abundantly *larger* \* than this whole *Earth*; on which so many lofty Mountains rise, and such vast Oceans roll. A Line, extending from Side to Side, through the Centre of that resplendent Orb, would measure more than eight hundred thousand Miles: a Girdle, formed to go round its Circumference, would require a Length of Millions: were its solid Contents to be estimated, the Account would overwhelm our Understanding, and be almost beyond the Power of Language to express†.—Are we startled at these Reports of Philosophy? Are we ready to cry out, in a Transport of Surprise? How *mighty* is the Being, who kindled such a prodigious

\* A hundred thousand Times, according to the *lowest* Reckoning. Sir ISAAC NEWTON computes the Sun to be 900,000 Times bigger than the Earth. *Religious Philosopher*, p. 749.

† Dr. DERHAM, after having calculated the Dimensions of the Planets, adds, “Amazing as these Masses are, they are all far outdone by that stupendous Globe of Light, the Sun; which, as it is the Fountain of Light and Heat, to all the Planets about it, so doth it far surpass them all in its Bulk: Its apparent Diameter being computed at 822,148 *English* Miles, its Ambit at 2,582,873 Miles, and its solid Contents at 290,971,000,000,000,000.” *Astro-Theol.* B. I. C. II.



gious Fire; and keeps alive, from Age to Age, such an enormous Mass of Flame!—Let us attend our philosophic Guides, and we shall be brought acquainted with Speculations, more enlarged and more amazing.

THIS Sun, with all its attendant Planets, is but a very little Part of the grand Machine of the Universe. Every *Star*, though in Appearance, no bigger than the Diamond, that glitters upon a Lady's Ring; is really a *vast Globe*, like the Sun in Size, and in Glory; no less spacious, no less luminous, than the radiant Source of our Day. So that every Star is, not barely a World, but the *Centre* of a magnificent System; has a Retinue of Worlds, irradiated by its Beams, and revolving round its attractive Influence. All which are lost, to our Sight, in unmeasurable Wilds of Æther.—That the Stars appear like so many diminutive, and scarce distinguishable *Points*, is owing to their immense and inconceivable Distance. Immense and inconceivable indeed it is; since a Ball, shot from the loaded Cannon, and flying with unabated Rapidity, must travel, at this impetuous Rate, almost seven hundred thousand Years\*, before it could reach the *nearest* of those twinkling Luminaries.

CAN any Thing be more wonderful, than these Observations? Yes; There are Truths far

\* See *Religious Philosopher*, p. 819.

far more stupendous; there are Scenes, far more extensive. As there is no End of the Almighty Maker's Greatness; so no Imagination can set Limits to his creating Hand.—Could you soar beyond the Moon, and pass through all the planetary Choir: could you wing your Way to the highest apparent Star, and take your Stand on one of those loftiest Pinnacles of Heaven: you would, there, see *other Skies* expanded; *another Sun*, distributing his inexhaustible Beams by Day: *other Stars*, that gild the Horrors of the alternate Night: and *other*\*, perhaps nobler *Systems*, established; established, in unknown Profusion, through the boundless Dimensions of Space.—Nor does the Dominion of the universal Sovereign terminate *there*. Even at the End of this vast Tour, you would find yourself advanced no farther, than the Suburbs of Creation; arrived only at the Frontiers of the great JEHOVAH'S Kingdom†.

AND

\* See *Astro-Theology*, Book II. Chap. II.—Where the Author, having assigned various Reasons to support this Theory of our *modern Astronomers*, adds—“ Besides the fore-mentioned strong Probabilities, we have this farther Recommendation of such an Account of the Universe, that it is far more magnificent and worthy of the infinite Creator, than any other of the narrower Schemes.”

† *Job*, after a most beautiful Dissertation, on the mighty Works of GOD; as they are distributed through universal

AND do they tell me; That the Sun, the Moon, and all the Planets, are but a little Part of HIS Works? How great, then, are his Signs! And how mighty are his Wonders\*!—And if so, what is the CREATOR Himself! How far exalted above all Praise! Who is so high; that he looks down on the highest of these dazzling Spheres, and sees even the Summit of Creation in a Vale: so great, that this prodigious Extent of Space, is but a Point in his Presence; and all this Confluence of Worlds, as the lightest Atom, that fluctuates in Air, and sports in the meridian Ray†.

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universal Nature, from the Heights of Heaven, to the very Depths of Hell; closes the magnificent Account with this Acknowledgment; *Lo! these are Parts of his Ways*. Or, as the original Word more literally signifies; and may, I think, be more elegantly rendered; These are only the *Skirts*, the very outermost Borders of his Works. No more than a small Preface to the immense Volume of the Creation.—From an *Hebrew* Word rendered *Extremities*, I cannot forbear thinking, on the extreme and very attenuated *Fibres* of the Root, when compared with the whole Substance of the *Trunk*; or on the exquisitely small Size of the *capillary* Vessels, when compared with the whole Structure of the Body. *Job* xxvi. 14.

\* *Dan.* iv. 3.

† This puts me in mind of a very fine Remark on a scriptural Beauty; and a solid Correction of the common Translation; made by that learned, sagacious, and devout Expositor *Vitringa*—*Isa.* xl. 15. We find it written of the Supreme Being, That he taketh up the Isles



Thou most sublime and incomprehensibly glorious God, how am I overwhelmed with Awe! How sunk into the lowest Prostration of Mind! When I consider thy "excellent Greatness," and my own utter Insignificancy! And have I, excessively mean as I am, have I entertained any conceited *Apprehensions* of myself? Have I felt the least Elatement of Thought, in the Presence of so majestic and adorable a Being? How should this wound me with Sorrow, and cover me with Confusion?—O my GOD, was I possessed of all the *high Perfections*, which accomplish and adorn the Angels of Light; amidst all these noble Endowments, I would as a very little Thing. Which, our Critic observes, is neither answerable to the Import of the Original, nor consonant to the Structure of the Discourse. The Prophet had no Intention to inform Mankind, what the Almighty could do, with regard to the Islands, if he pleased to exert uncontrollable Power. His Design was to shew, how insignificant, or rather what mere Nothings they are, in his Esteem, and before his Majesty.—The Islands, says he, though so *spacious*, as to afford Room for the Erection of Kingdoms, and the Abode of Nations; though so *strong*, as to withstand, for many Thousands of Years, the raging and reiterated Assaults of the whole watery World; are yet, before the adored JEHOVAH, small as the minutest Grain, which the Eye can scarce discern; light as the feathered Moth, which the least Breath hurries away like a Tempest, *Insulae sunt ut leve quid, quod avolat*. The deep-rooted Islands are as the volatile Atom, which, by the gentlest Undulations of the Air, is wafted to and fro in perpetual Agitation.



would fall down in the *deepest Abasement* at thy Feet. Lost in the infinitely superior Blaze of thy uncreated Glories; I would confess myself to be Nothing; to be less than Nothing, and Vanity. — How much more ought I to maintain the most unfeigned Humiliation, before thy Divine Majesty; who art not only Dust and Ashes, but a Compound of Ignorance, Imperfection, and Depravity!

WHILE, beholding this vast Expanse, I learn my own extreme Meanness; I would also discover the abject Littleness of all *terrestrial Things*. — What is the Earth, with all her ostentatious Scenes, compared with this astonishingly grand Furniture of the Skies? What, but a dim *Speck*, hardly perceivable in the Map of the Universe? It is observed, by a very judicious Writer \*. That if the Sun himself, which enlightens this Part of the Creation, was extinguished; and all the Host of planetary Worlds, which move about him, were annihilated; they would not be missed, by an Eye that can take in the whole Compass of Nature, any more than a Grain of Sand upon the Sea Shore. The Bulk of which they consist, and the Space which they occupy, is so exceedingly little in comparison of the Whole; that their Loss would scarce leave a Blank, in the Immenity of God's Works. — If then, not our

M 2

Globe

\* Spect. Vol. VIII. No. 565.

Globe only, but this whole Syſtem, be ſo very diminutive; what is a Kingdom, or a County? What are a few *Lordſhips*, or the ſo much admired *Patrimonies* of thoſe, who are ſtiled Wealthy\*? When I meaſure them with my own little Puttance, they ſwell into proud and bloated Dimenſions. But, when I take the Univerſe for my Standard, how ſcanty is their Size, how contemptible their Figure? They ſhrink into *pompous Nothings*†.

When the keen-eyed Eagle ſoars above all the feathered Race, and leaves their very Sight below: when the wings her Way, with direct Aſcent, up the Steep of Heaven! and, ſteadily gazing on the meridian Sun, accounts its beaming Splendors all her own: Does ſhe then regard, with any Solitude, the *Mote* that is flying in the Air, or the *Duſt* which ſhe ſhook from her Feet? And ſhall this eternal Mind, which is capable of contemplating its Creator's Glory; which is intended to enjoy the Viſions of his Countenance; ſhall this *eternal Mind*, endued with ſuch great Capacities, and made for ſuch exalted Ends, be ſo ignobly ambitious, as to ſigh for the Tinfels of State; or ſo poorly covetous, as to graſp after ample Territories on a Needle's Point?—No: under the Influence

\* *Juvat inter ſidera vagantem divitum pavimenta ridere, et totam cum auro ſua terram.*

† *Terrellæ granlia inania.*

SEN.

WATT'S HOR. Lyr.

Influence of such Considerations I feel my Sentiments expand, and my wishes acquire a Turn of Sublimity. My throbbing Desires after worldly Grandeur, die away; and I find myself, if not possessed of Power, yet superior to its Charms.—Too long, must I own, have my Affections been pinioned by Vanity, and immured in this earthly Clod. But these Thoughts break the *Shackles* \*. These Objects open the Door of *Liberty*. My Soul, fired by such noble Prospects, weighs Anchor from this little Nook; and coasts no longer about its contracted Shores; dotes no longer on its painted Shells. The *Immensity* of Things, is her Range; and an *Infinity* of Bliss, is her Aim.

BEHOLD this immense Expanse, and admire the *Condescension* of thy God.—In this Manner, an inspired and princely Astronomer, improved his Survey of the nocturnal Heavens. *When I consider thy Heavens, even the Works of thy Fingers, the Moon and the Stars which Thou hast ordained; I am smitten with Wonder at thy Glory, and cry out in a Transport of Gratitude, LORD, what is Man, That thou art*  
M 3 *mindful*

\* The Soul of Man was made to walk the Skies,  
Delightful Outlet of her Prison here!

There, disincumber'd from her Chains, the Ties  
Of Toys terrestrial, she can rove at large;

There freely can respire, dilate, extend,

In full Proportion let loose all her Powers.

*Night-Thoughts, No. IX*



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mindful of him *in the Son of Man, that Thou visitest him*! How amazing, how charming, is that Divine Benignity, which is pleased to bow down its sacred Regards, to so foolish and worthless a Creature! Yea, disdains not, from the Height of infinite Exaltation, to extend its kind providential Care, to our most minute Concerns!—This is amazing. But that the Everlasting Sovereign should give his Son, to be made Flesh, and become our Saviour! Shall I call it a *Miracle* of condescending Goodness? Rather, What are all Miracles, what are all Mysteries, to this ineffable Gift!"

HAD the *brightest Archangel* been commissioned to come down, with the Olive-Branch of Peace in his Hand, signifying his Eternal Maker's Readiness to be reconciled; on our bended Knees, with Tears of Joy, and a Torrent of Thankfulness, we ought to have received the transporting News. But when, instead of such an angelic Envoy, He sends His *only-begotten Son*; his Son beyond all Thought illustrious, to make us the gracious Overture:—sends him from the "Habitation of his Holiness and Glory," to put on the *Infirmities* of Mortality, and dwell in a Tabernacle of Clay:—sends Him, not barely to make us a transient Visit, but to abide *many Years* in our inferior

\* Psal. viii. 3, 4.



inferior and miserable World :—sends Him, not to exercise Dominion over Monarchs, but to wear out his Life in the ignoble Form of a *Servant*; and, at last, to make his Exit under the infamous Character of a *Malefactor*! Was ever Love like this? Did ever Grace stoop so low?—Should the Sun be shorn of all his radiant

\* This reminds me of a very noble Piece of *sacred Oratory*, where, in a fine Series of the most beautiful Gradations, the apostle displays the admirably condescending Kindness of our Saviour.—*He thought it no Robbery, it was His indisputable Right, to be equal with the infinite, self-existent, immortal G O D. Yet, in Mercy to Sinners, He emptied Himself of the incommunicable Honours, and laid aside the Robes of incomprehensible Glory.*—When He entered upon His mediatorial State, instead of acting in the grand Capacity of universal Sovereign, He took upon him the Form of a *Servant*. And not the Form of those ministering Spirits, whose Duty is Dignity itself; who are throned, though adoring.—He took not on him the Nature of Angels, but stooped incomparably lower. Assumed a Body of animated Dust, and was made in the Likeness of Men; those inferior and depraved Creatures.— *Astonishing Condescension! but not sufficient for the overflowing Richness of the Redeemer's Love. For, being found in Fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself farther still. Occupied the lowest Place, where all was low and ignoble. He not only submitted to the Yoke of the Law, but also bore the Infirmities, and ministered to the Necessities of Mortals. He even washed the Feet of others, and had not where to lay his own Head.*—Yea, he carried His meritorious Humiliation, to the very deepest Degrees of possible Abasement. He became obedient unto Death—And not to a common or natural

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radiant Honours, and degraded into a *Clod* of the Valleys; should all the Dignitaries of Heaven be depofed from their Thrones, and degenerate into *Insects* of a Day; great, great would be the Abasement. But *nothing* to Thine, moft blessed Jesus; *nothing* to Thine, Thou Prince of Peace; when, for us Men, and for our Salvation, Thou didft not abhor the coarfe Accommodations of the *Manger*; Thou didft not decline even the gloomy Horrors of the *Grave*.

'Tis well, the facred Oracles have given this Doctrine, the moft explicit Confirmation, and Evidence quite incontestable. Otherwise, a Favour fo undeserved, fo unexpected, and rich beyond all Imagination, might stagger our Belief.—Could HE, who launches all these planetary Globes, through the illimitable Void; and leads them on, from Age to Age, in their extenfive Career; could HE resign his Hands, to be confined by the girding Cord; and his Back to be *plowed*, by the bloody Scourge?—Could HE, who crowns all the Stars with inextinguishable *Brightness*; be Himself defiled with *Spitting*, and disfigured with the thorny Scar? It is the greateft of Wonders, and yet the sureft of Truths.

O!  
natural Death, but a Death more infamous than the Gibbet; more torterous than the Rack;—*even the accursed Death of the Cross*. Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

O! Ye mighty Orbs, that roll along the Spaces of the Sky; I wondered, a little while ago, at your vast Dimensions, and ample Circuits. But now my Amazement ceases; or rather, is intirely swallowed up by a much more stupendous Subject. Methinks, your enormous Bulk is shrivelled to an *Atom*; your prodigious Revolutions are contracted to a *Span*; while I muse upon the far more elevated Heights, and unfathomable Depths; the infinitely more extended Lengths, and unlimited Breadths, of this *Love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS*.\*

CONTEMPLATING this stately Expanse, I see a Mirror, which represents, in the most awful Colours, the *Heinousness* of human Guilt. — Ten thousand Volumes; wrote on purpose, to display the Aggravations of my various Acts of Disobedience; could not so effectually convince me of their inconceivable Enormity, as the Consideration of that *all-glorious Person*†; who, to make an Atonement for them, spilt the last Drop of his Blood. — *I have sinned*, may every Child of Adam say; and what shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Observer of Men‡? Shall I give my

\* Eph. iii. 18, 19.

† Quo quisque alitus ascendit in agnitione CHRISTI, eo profundius peccati atrocitatem cognoscel.

‡ Job vii. 20. Not Preserver, as it stands in our Version, but Observer of Men. Which Phrase, as it denotes the exact and incessant Inspection of the divine Eye; as it intimates



my First-born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul? Vain Commutation! and such as would be rejected by the blessed God, with the utmost Abhorrence. — Will all the *Potentates*, that sway the Sceptre in a thousand Kingdoms, devote their royal and honoured Lives, to rescue an obnoxious Creature from the Stroke of Vengeance? Alas! it must cost more, incomparably more, to expiate the Malignity of Sin, and save a guilty Wretch from Hell. — Will all the *Principalities* of Heaven be content to assume my Nature, and resign themselves to Death for my Pardon\*? Even this,

intimates the absolute Impossibility, that any Transgression should *escape* the divine Notice; is evidently most proper, both to assign the *Reason*, and heighten the *Emphasis* of the Context.

\* MILTON sets this Thought in a very poetical and striking Light. — All the Sanctities of Heaven, stand round the Throne of the supreme Majesty. God foresees and foretels the Fall of Man; the *Ruin*, which will unavoidably ensue on his Transgression; and the utter *Impossibility*, of his being able to extricate himself, from the Abyss of Misery.

*He, with his whole Posterity, must die;*

*Die he, or Justice must; unless for Him*

*Some other able, and as willing pay*

*The rigid Satisfaction, Death for Death.*

After which affecting Representation, intended to raise the most tender Emotions of Pity; the following Inquiry is addressed to all the surrounding Angels;



this, would be too mean a Satisfaction, for inexorable Justice! too scanty a Reparation, of God's injured Honour. So flagrant is human Guilt, that nothing, but a Victim of *infinite Dignity*, could constitute an adequate Propitiation.—*He* who said, "Let there be Light, and there was Light; Let there be a Firmament, and immediately the blue Curtains floated in the Sky! *He* must take Flesh; *He* must feel the fierce Torments of Crucifixion; and pour out his Soul in Agonies, if ever such Transgressors are pardoned.

How vast is that Debt; which all the Wealth of both the *Indies* cannot discharge! How viti-

ated

*Say, heav'nly Pow'rs, where shall we find such Love?*

*Which of you will be mortal, to redeem*

*Man's mortal Crime? and die, the Dead to save?*

*He ask'd; but all the heav'nly Choir stood mute,*

*And Silence was in Heaven.—*

There is, to me at least, an inimitable Spirit and Beauty in the last Circumstance.—That such an innumerable Multitude, of generous and compassionate Beings, should be struck dumb with Surprise and Terror, at the very Mention of *The deadly Forfeiture and Ransom* set! No Language is so eloquent as this Silence. Words could not possibly have expressed, in so emphatical a Manner, the dreadful Nature of the Task; the absolute Inability of any or all Creatures to execute it; the super-eminent and matchless Love of the Eternal Son, in undertaking the tremendous Work; not only without Reluctance, but unsought and unimplored; with Readiness, Alacrity, and Delight. *Paradise Lost*, Book III. Line 209. Edit. BENTL.

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ated that Habit of Body; which all the Drugs produced by Nature herself, cannot rectify! But how much more *ruined* was thy Condition, O my Soul! how much more *heinous* were thy Crimes! Since nothing less than the Sufferings and death of Messiah, the Son of God, and radiant Image of his Glory, could effect thy Recovery, or cancel thy Iniquity. Though perhaps, thou art not sunk so very deep in Pollution, as some of the most abandoned Profligates; yet remember the inestimable Ransom, paid to redeem thee from everlasting Destruction. Remember this; and “never open thy Mouth any more\*,” either to *murmur* at the Divine Chastisements, or to glory in thy own Attainments. Remember this; and even “*loath* thyself† for the Multitude of thy Provocations,” and thy great Baseness.

ONCE more: Let me view this beautiful, this magnificent Expanse; and conceive some juster Apprehensions, of the unknown Richness of my *Saviour's Atonement*.—I am informed by a Writer, who cannot mistake, that the High-priest of my Profession, who was also the Sacrifice for my Sins, is *higher than the Heavens*‡ more exalted in Dignity, more bright with Glory, than all the heavenly Mansions, and all their illustrious Inhabitants. If my

Heart

\* Ezek. xvi. 63. † Ezek. xxxvi. 31. ‡ Heb. vii. 26.

Heart was humbled, at the Consideration of its excessive Guilt; how do all my drooping Powers revive, at this delightful Thought? The poor Criminal, that seemed to be *tottering* on the very Brink of the infernal Pit; is *raised*, by such a Belief, even to the Portals of Paradise. My Self-abasement, I trust, will always continue; but my Fears, under the Influence of such a Conviction, are quite gone\*. I do not, I cannot, doubt the Efficacy of this

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Pro-

\* I am sorry to find, that some of my Readers were a little disgusted at this Expression, "*My Fears are quite gone.*" As thinking, it discovered a Tincture of Arrogance in the Writer, and tended to discourage the weak Christian. But, I hope a more mature Consideration will acquit me, from *both* these Charges.—For, what has the Author said? Only, that at some *peculiarly happy* Moments, when the Holy Ghost bears Witness of CHRIST in his Heart, and he is favoured with a Glimpse of the Redeemer's matchless Excellency—that, in these *brighter Intervals* of Life, his trembling Fears, with regard to the decisive Sentence of the great Tribunal, are turned into pleasing Expectations. And what is there in such a Declaration, offensive to the *strictest* Modesty, or dispiriting to the *weakest* Believer? Instead of creating Discouragement, it points out the Way to obtain a settled Tranquillity. Its natural Tendency is, to engage the serious Mind in a more constant and attentive Meditation, on the unknown Merits of the Divine MEDIATOR. And were we more *thoroughly* acquainted, more *deeply* affected, with his unutterable Dignity; I am persuaded, our uneasy Apprehensions would *proportionably* vanish; our Faith be established, our Hopes brightened, and our Joys enlarged.

Propitiation. While I see a Glimpse of its matchless Excellency; and verily believe myself, interested in its Merits; I know not what it is, to feel any misgiving or Suspensions; but am stedfast in Faith, and joyful through Hope.

By my Iniquities like Debts of Millions of Talents, here is more than full Payment for all that prodigious Sum. Let the Enemy of Mankind, and Accuser of the Brethren, load me with Invectives; this one Plea, *A Divine Redeemer died*, most thoroughly quashes every Indictment. For, though there be much Turpitude, and manifold Transgressions, there is no Condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. Nay, were I chargeable with all the vilest Deeds, which have been committed in every Age of the World, by every Nation of Men; even in this most deplorable Case, I need not sink into Despair. Even such Guilt, though grievous beyond all Expression, is not to be compared with that Abundance of Grace and Righteousness, which dwell in the incarnate Divinity.—How great, how transcendently glorious, are the Perfections of the adorable JEHOVAH! So great, so superlatively precious, is the Expiation of the dying Jesus. 'Tis impossible for the human Mind,

to exalt this Atonement \*, too highly; tis impossible  
 \* This Doctrine, tho' rich with Consolation to the ruined



possible for the HUMBLE PENITENT, to *confide* in it, too readily. The Scriptures, the Scriptures of eternal Truth have said it (exult, my Soul, in the Belief of it), that the Blood on which we rely, is God's own Blood; and therefore all-sufficient to expiate, omnipotent to save.

DAVID that egregious Sinner; but more exemplary Saint, seems to have been well acquainted with this comfortable Truth. What else can be the Import of that very remarkable, but most devout Declaration? *Thou shalt purge me with Hyssop, and I shall be clean: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than Snow.*—"I have been guilty, I must confess, of the most

N 2 "com-ruined Sinner; yet, is it not likely to open a Door for Licentiousness: and embolden Transgressors to prosecute their VICES?—No: It is the most powerful Motive to that genuine Repentance, which flows from an unfeigned Love of God; and operates in a hearty Detestation of all Sin. One, who knew the unmeasurable Goodness of the LORD, and was no Stranger to the sinful Perverseness of our Nature, says, *There is Mercy with Thee: THEREFORE shall thou be feared.* Psal. cxxx. 4.—Words, full to my Purpose; which, at once add the highest Authority to this Sentiment, and direct our Minds to its proper Influence, and due Improvement.

\* Acts xx. 28. I prefer this Translation, before the new one. Because this speaks the Language of a more steadfast Belief, and gives the highest Honour to the Divine Goodness. Were the Words intended

" complicated and shocking Crimes; Crimes,  
 " inflamed by every aggravating Circumstance,  
 " with regard to Myself, my Neighbour, and  
 " my God. Myself, who have been blessed  
 " above Men, and the distinguished Favourite  
 " of Providence; my Neighbour, who, in the  
 " most dear and tender Interests, \* has been  
 " irreparably injured; my G O D, who might  
 " justly expect the most grateful Returns, of  
 " Duty, instead of such enormous Violations  
 " of his Law. Yet, all horrid and execrable as  
 " my Offence is, it is nothing to the superabun-  
 " dant Merit of that great Redeemer, who was  
 " promised from the Foundations of the  
 " World; in whom all my Fathers trusted;  
 " who is the Hope of all the Ends of the Earth.  
 " Though my Conscience be more loathsome,  
 " with adulterous Impurity, than the *Dunghill*;  
 " though Treachery and Murder have rendered  
 " it even black as the Gloom of *Hell*; yet,  
 " washed in the ' Fountain opened for Sin and  
 " for Uncleanness \* I shall be—I say not, pure  
 " only, this were a Disparagement to the Ef-  
 " ficacy of my Saviour's Death; but I shall be  
 " fair as the *Lily*, and white as the *Snow*.  
 " Nay,  
 " tended to bear no more than the common *petitionary*  
 " Sense; and not to be expressive of a noble *Plerophory* of  
 " Faith; they would rather have been *Imperatives*, not *Pe-*  
 " tures.

\* Zech. xiii. 1.

"Nay, let me not derogate from the glorious  
 "Object of my Confidence; cleansed by this  
 "sovereign sanctifying Stream, I shall be  
 "fairer than the full-blown Lily, whiter than  
 "the new-fallen Snows."

**POWER**, saith the Scripture, *belongeth unto GOD* \*.—And in what majestic Lines, is this Attribute of **JEHOVAH** written, throughout the whole Volume of the Creation? Especially, through those magnificent Pages, unfolded in yonder starry Regions. Which are therefore stiled, by the sweet and seraphic Singer of *Israel*, "The Firmament of his Power †." Because, the grand *Exploits of Omnipotence* are there displayed, with the utmost Pomp; and recorded, in the most legible Characters.

Who, that looks upward to the midnight Sky; and, with an Eye of Reason, beholds its rolling Wonders; who can forbear inquiring, Of *what* were those mighty Orbs *formed*?—Amazing to relate! They were produced without Materials. They sprung from Emptiness itself. The stately Fabric of universal Nature emerged out of *Nothing*.—What *Instruments* were used by the Supreme Architect, to fashion the Parts with such exquisite Niceness, and to give so beautiful a Polish to the whole? How all was connected into one finely-proportioned and nobly-finished Structure?—*A bare Fiat ac-*

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\* Psal. lxii. 11. † Psal. cl. 1.

complished all. LET THEM BE, said GOD. He added no more; and immediately the marvellous Edifice arose; adorned with every Beauty; displaying innumerable Perfections; and declaring, amidst enraptur'd Seraphs, its great Creator's Praise. "By the *Word* of the LORD were the Heavens made, and all the Host of them by the *Breath* of his Mouth \*."—What forcible Machinery *fixed* some of those ponderous Globes, on an immoveable Basis? What irresistible Impulse *bowled* others, through the Circuit of the Heavens? What coercive Energy *confined* their impetuous Courses, within Limits astonishingly large, yet most minutely true?—Nothing but his *sovereign Will*.

For  
\* If this Thought is admitted a Second Time, and suffered to ennoble the next Paragraph; it is partly, because of its unequalled *Sublimity*; partly, because it awakens the most *grand* Idea of creating Power; and partly, because the Practice of the *Psalmist*, an Authority too great to be controverted, is my Precedent.—The beautiful Stanza quoted from *Psal.* xxxiii. 6. is a Proof, how thoroughly the Royal Poet entered into the Majesty of the *Mosaic* Narration. The Repetition of the Sentiment, ver. 9. intimates, how peculiarly he was charmed, with that *noble Manner*, of describing the Divine Operations. While the Turn of his own Composition shews, how perfectly he possessed the same *elevated Way* of thinking. And this, long before *Longinus* wrote the celebrated Treatise, which has taught the Heathen, as well as the Christian World, to admire the *Dignity* of the *Jewish* Legislator's Style. *Vid.* LONGIN. de Sublim. Sect. IX.



For all Things were at first constituted, and all to this Day abide, "according to his Ordinance."

WITHOUT any toilsome Assiduity or laborious Process, to raise—to touch—to *speck* such a Multitude of immense Bodies into Being—to *launch* them through the Spaces of the Sky, as an Arrow from the Hand of a Giant—to impress on such *unwieldy* Masses a Motion, far out-stripping the Swiftness of the winged Creation \*—and to *continue* them in the same rapid Whirl for Thousands and Thousands of Years—What an amazing Instance of infinite Might is this!—Can any thing be impossible to the LORD, the LORD God; the Creator and Controuler, of all the Ends

\* To give *one* Instance of this Remark.—The Earth, in the diurnal Revolution, which it performs on its own Axis, *whirls about* at the Rate of above a Thousand Miles an Hour. And as the great Orbit, which it describes annually round the Sun, is reckoned at 540 Millions of Miles, it must *travel* near a Million and a Half, each Day.—What a *Force* must be requisite, to protrude so vast a Globe: and wheel it on, loaded as it is, with huge Mountains, and ponderous Rocks, at such a prodigious Degree of Rapidity! It surpasses human Conception!—How natural, how pertinent, how almost necessary, after such an Observation, is the Acknowledgment made by holy *Job*! *I know that Thou canst do every Thing, and that no Thought, no imaginable Scheme, can be withholden from thee, can lie beyond thy Power to execute.* Chap. xlii. 2.

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Ends of the Earth, all the Regions of the Universe? Rather, is not all that we count *difficult*, perfect Ease to that glorious Being, who only spake, and the World was made\*? Who only gave command, and the stupendous Axle was lodged fast, the lofty Wheels moved complete? —What a sure Defence, O my Soul, is this everlasting Strength of thy God! Be this thy continual *Refuge*, in the Article of Danger; this thy never-failing *Resource*, in every Time of Need.

WHAT cannot this uncontrollable Power, of the great JEHOVAH, effect for his People? Be their Miseries ever so galling, cannot this God relieve them? Be their Wants ever so numerous, cannot this God supply them? Be their Corruptions within, ever so inveterate; or their Temptations without, ever so importunate; cannot this mighty, mighty God subdue the former, and fortify them against the latter? —Should *Trials*, with an incessant Vehemence, sift thee as Wheat; should *Tribulation*, with a Weight of Woes, almost grind thee to Powder; should *Pleasure*, with her bewitching Smiles, solicit thee to delicious Ruin; yet “hold thee “fast by God,” and lay thy Help upon Him, that is omnipotent†. Thou canst not be involved

\* Psal. xxxii. 9.  
† It is a most charming Description, as well as a most comfortable Promise, which we find in *Isa. xl. 29, 30, 31.*—He

volved in such calamitous Circumstances, or exposed to such imminent Peril; but thy God, whom thou serveſt, is able to deliver thee from the one, and to ſupport thee under the other. — *To ſupport! to deliver!* Let me not diſhonour the unlimited Greatneſs of his Power. He is able to exalt Thee, from the deepeſt Diſtreſs, to the moſt triumphant Joy; and to make even a Complication of Evils, work together for thy everlaſting Good. *He is able, not*

31. — *He giveth Power to the Feeble; and to them that have no Might at all, He not only imparteth, but increaſeth Strength; making it to abound, where it did not ſo much as exiſt.* — Without this Aid of JEHOVAH, even the Youths, amidſt the very Prime of their Vigour and Activity, ſhall become languid in their Work, and weary in their Courſe. And the young Men, to whoſe Reſolution and Abilities nothing ſeems impracticable, ſhall not only ſucceed, but utterly fall, and miſcarry in their various Enterprizes. — Whereas, they that wait upon the LORD, and conſide in his Grace, ſhall paſs on, with a generous Ardor, from one Degree of religious Improvement to another. Inſtead of exhauſting, they renew their Strength; Difficulties ſhall animate, and Toil invigorate them. They ſhall mount up, as with ſoaring Wings, above all Oppoſition; they ſhall be carried through every Diſcouragement, as Eagles cleave the yielding Air. They ſhall run with Speed and Alacrity, the Way of God's Commandments, and not be weary: They ſhall hold on, (*progredientur, carpent iter*) with Conſtancy and Perſeverance, in thoſe peaceful Paths, and not faint; but arrive at the End of their Progreſs, and receive the Prize of their High Calling. To

not only to accomplish what I have been speaking, but to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask, or think\*.

O! THE wretched Condition of the Wicked, who have this LORD of all Power for their Enemy! O! the desperate Madness of the Ungodly, who provoke the Almighty to Jealousy!—Besotted Creatures! are you able to contend with your Maker, and enter the Lists against incensed Omnipotence?—Can you bear the Fierce-

To this most cheering Doctrine, permit me to add its no less beautiful and delightful Contrast. Eliphaz, speaking of the Enemies of the Righteous, says, —*Nihil excisum factio nobis adversaria.*—We should reckon, our Language acquitted itself tolerably well, if, when depreciating the Abilities of an Adversary, it should represent them weak as the scorched Thread, feeble as the dissolving Smoke. But these are cold Forms of Speech, compared with the Eloquence of the East. According to the Genius of our Bible, All the Power that opposes the Godly, is a mere Nothing; or, to speak with a more emphatical Air of Contempt, a destroyed, an extirpated Nothing.—Admire this Expression, ye that are charmed with daring Images, and (what Tully calls *verbum ardens*) a spirited and glowing Diction.—Remember this Declaration, ye that fight the good Fight of Faith. The united Force of all your Enemies, be it ever so formidable to the Eye of Flesh, is, before your Almighty Guardian, *Nihil nihilissimum*, not only Nothing, but less than nothing, and Vanity. *Job xxii. 20.*

\* I should, in this Place, avoid swelling the Notes any farther, was it not to take Notice of the inimitable Passage



Fierceness of his Wrath, or sustain the Vengeance of his lifted Arm? At his Presence, though awfully serene, the Hills melt like Wax, and the Mountains skip like frightened "Lambs." At the least Intimation of his Displeasure, the Foundations of Nature rock, and the "Pillars of Heaven tremble." How then can a withered Leaf endure, when "his Lips are full of Indignation, and his Tongue as a devouring Fire?"—Or can anything screen a guilty Worm, when the great and terrible God shall *whet his glittering Sword, and his Hand take hold on inexorable Judgment?* When *that Hand*, which shoots the Planets, Masses of excessive Bulk \*, with such surprising Rapidity,

Passage quoted above, and to be found *Eph. iii. 20.*—Which, if I do not greatly mistake, is the most complete Representation of Divine Power, that it is possible for Words to frame.—To do all that our Tongues can ask, is a Miracle of Might. But we often think more than we can express, and are actuated with "*groanings unutterable.*" Yet, to answer these vast Desires, is not beyond the Accomplishment of our heavenly Father.—Nay, to make his Gifts and his Blessings commensurate to the *largest Stretch* of human Expectations, is a small thing with the God of Glory. He is able to do *above all*, that the most enlarged Apprehension can imagine; yea, to do *abundantly more, exceeding abundantly more*, than the Mind itself, in the utmost Exertion of all its Faculties, is capable of *wishing*, or knows how to *conceive*.

\* One of the Planets (*Saturn*) is supposed to be more than

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dity, through the Sky: *that Hand*, which darts the Comets to such unmeasurable Distances, beyond the Orbit of our remotest Planet, beyond the Pursuit of the strongest Eye: when *THAT HAND* is stretched out to punish, can the Munition of Rocks, the Intervention of Seas, or even interposing Worlds, divert the Blow?—Consider this, *Ambition*; and bow thy haughty Crest. Consider this, *Disobedience*; and bend thy iron Sinew. O! consider this, all ye that forget, or affront, the tremendous *JEHOVAH*. He can, by a single Act of his Will, lay the Universe in utter Ruin: and can He want Power to bring *you*, in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye, to the Dust of Death, or to the Flames of Hell? He has—I say not, Ten thousand Lightnings to scorch you to Ashes; Ten thousand Thunders to crush you into Atoms; but, what is unspeakably more dreadful—He has an *Army* of Terrors, even in the *Look* of his angry Countenance. His very Frown is worse than Destruction.

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than 90 times as big, as the Globe on which we live. According to the same Calculation, the largest of the Planets (*Jupiter*) is above 200 times vaster, than this vast Collection of spacious Forests, towering Mountains, extensive Continents, and boundless Oceans.—Such enormous Magnitude! winged with such prodigious Speed!—It raises Astonishment beyond Expression.—With *GOD* is terrible Majesty! Job xxxvii. 22.—Who shall not fear *THEE*, O LORD, and glorify thy Name? Rev. xv. 4.

I CANNOT dismiss this Subject, without admiring the *Patience* of the blessed God. Who, though so strong and powerful, yet "is provoked every Day."—Surely, as is his Majesty, so is his Mercy; his Pity altogether commensurate to his Power. If I vilify but the Name of an earthly Monarch; I lose my Liberty, and am confined to the Dungeon. If I appear in Arms, and draw the Sword, against my national Sovereign; my Life is forfeited, and my very Blood will scarce atone for the Crime. But Thee I have dishonoured, O! thou King immortal and invisible! Against Thee my Breast has fomented *secret Disaffection*; my Behaviour has risen up in *open Rebellion*; and yet I am spared, yet I am preserved. Instead of being banished from thy Presence; I sit at thy Table, and am fed from thy Hand. Instead of pursuing me with *Thunderbolts* of Vengeance, thy *Favours* surround me on every Side. That Arm, that injured Arm, which might justly fall, with irretrievable Ruin, on a Traitor's Head; is most graciously stretched out, to caress him, with the tenderest Endearments; to cherish him, with every Instance of paternal Kindness.—O! thou mightiest, thou best of Beings, how am I pained at my very Soul, for such shameful and odious *Disingenuity*! Let me always abominate myself, as the basest of Creatures; but *adore* that un-

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wearied Long-suffering of thine, which refuses to be irritated; *love* that unremitted Goodness, which no Acts of Ingratitude could stop, or so much as check, in its gracious Current. O! let this stubborn Heart; which Duty could not bind; which Threatenings could not awe; be the Captive, the *willing Captive*, of such triumphant Beneficence.

I HAVE often been struck with Wonder at that Almighty Skill, which *weighed* the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Balance; which *proportioned* the Waters in the Hollow of its Hand, and *adjusted* the Dust of the Earth \* by a Measure. But how much more marvellous is that magnificent Oeconomy, which *poised* the Stars with inexpressible Nicety, and

\* *Isa. xl. 12. The Dust of the Earth*, in this sublime Scripture, signifies the dry Land, or *solid Part* of our Globe. Which is placed in Contradistinction to the whole Collection of *fluid Matter*, mentioned in the preceding Clause.—Perhaps this remarkable Expression may be intended to imitate, not only the extreme Niceness, which stated the Dimensions of the World *in general*, or in the gross; but also that *particular Exactness*, with which the very smallest Materials, that constitute its Frame, (not excepting each individual Atom) were calculated and disposed.—*q. d.* 'Tis a small Thing to say, No such enormous Redundancies, as unnecessary Ridges of Mountains, were suffered to subsist. There was not so much as the least Grain of Sand *superfluous*, or a single Particle of Dust *deficient*.—As the grand Aim of the Description is, to celebrate the *consummate Wisdom*, exempli-



meted out the Heavens with a Span! Where all is prodigiously vast; immensely various; and yet more than mathematically exact. Surely, the *Wisdom* of God manifests itself in the Skies, and shines in those lucid Orbs. Shines on the contemplative Mind, with a Lustre incomparably brighter, than that which their united Splendors transmit to the Eye.

BEHOLD yonder countless Multitude of Globes; consider their amazing Magnitude; regard them as the Sovereigns of so many Systems, each accompanied with his planetary Equipage. Upon this Supposition, what a Multiplicity of mighty Spheres, must be perpetually running their Rounds, in the upper Regions! Yet, none mistake their Way, or *wander* from the Goal; though they pass through trackless and unbounded Fields. None *fly off* from their Orbits, into extravagant Excursions; none *press in* upon their Centre, with too near an Approach. None *interfere* with each other in their perennial Passage; or *intercept* the kindly

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emplified in the Creation; and to display that *perfect Proportion*, with which every Part tallies, coincides, and harmonizes, with the Whole; I have taken Leave to alter the Word of our *English* Translation *comprehend*, and introduce in its stead a Term, equally faithful to the *Hebrew*, and more significative of the Prophet's precise Idea.

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Communications of another's Influence\*. But all their Rotations proceed in eternal Harmony; keeping such Time, and observing such Laws, as are most exquisitely adapted to the Perfection of the Whole.

WHILE I contemplate this "excellent Wisdom, which made the Heavens," and attunes all their Motions; how am I abashed at that Mixture of Arrogance and Folly, which has, at any Time, inclined me to murmur at thy *Dispensations*. O LORD! what is this, but a sort of implicit Treason against thy Supremacy; and a tacit Denial of thy infinite Understanding?—Hast Thou so regularly placed such a wonderful Diversity of Systems, through the Spaces of the Universe?—Didst Thou, without any probationary Essays, without any improving Retouches, speak them into the most consummate Perfection?—Dost Thou continually superintend all their Circumstances, with a Sagacity that never mistakes the minutest Title of Propriety? And shall I be so unaccountably stupid, as to question the *Justness* of thy *Discernment*, in "choosing my Inheritance, and fixing the Bounds of my Habitation?" —Not

\* The Interception of Light, by means of an Eclipse, happens very rarely. And then is of so *short* a Continuance, as not to be at all inconvenient. Nay, it is attended with such *Circumstances*, as render it rather useful, than prejudicial.

—Not a single Erratum, in modelling the Structure; determining the Distance\*; and conducting the Career of *unnumbered* Worlds! And shall my peevish Humour presume to censure thy Interposition, with regard to the Affairs of *one* inconsiderable Creature; whose Stature, in such a comparative View, is less than a Span; and his present Duration, little more than a Moment?

O! THOU GOD, “in whose Hand my “Breath is, and whose are all my Ways, let such Sentiments as now possess my Thoughts, be always lively on my Heart! These shall compose my Mind into a *cheerful* Acquiescence, and a *thankful* Submission; even when Afflictions gall the Sense, or Disappointments break my Schemes. Then shall I, like the grateful Patriarch †, in all the Changes of my Condition, and even in the Depths of Distress, erect

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\* The Sun in particular (and let this serve as a Specimen of that most curious Exactness, with which the other celestial Bodies are constituted, and all their Circumstances regulated) the Sun is formed of such a determinate Magnitude, and placed at such a convenient Distance—“as not to annoy, but only refresh us, and “nourish the Ground with its kindly Warmth. If it “was larger, it would set the Earth on Fire; if smaller, “it would leave it frozen. If it was nearer us, we should be scorched to Death; if farther from us, we “should not be able to live for want of Heat.

STACKH. *Hist. Bible.*

† See Gen. xii. 7, 8.

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an *Altar* of adoring Resignation; and inscribe it with the Apostle's *Motto*, **TO GOD ONLY WISE.** Then, shouldest Thou give me Leave to be the Carver of my own Fortunes, I would Humbly desire to relinquish the Grant, and recommit the Disposal of myself to thy unerring Beneficence. Fully persuaded, that *thy Counsels*; though contrary to my froward Inclinations, or even afflictive to my Flesh; are incomparably more eligible, than the blind Impulse of my own Will, however soothing to animal Nature.

On a careless Inspection, you perceive no Accuracy or Uniformity in the Position of the heavenly Bodies. They appear like an *illustrious Chaos*; a promiscuous Heap of shining Globes; neither ranked in Order, nor moving by Line.—But, what *seems* Confusion, is all Regularity. What carries a Show of Negligence, is really the Result of the most masterly Contrivance. You think, perhaps, they rove in their aerial Flight; but they rove by the nicest Rule, and without the least Error. Their Circuits, though seemingly devious; their Mazes, though intricate to our Apprehensions\*; are marked out, not indeed with golden Compasses, but

\* — Mazes intricate,  
Eccentric, intervolved; yet regular  
Then most, when most irregular they seem.

MILT.



but by the infinitely more exact Determinations of the all-wise Spirit.

So, what wears the *Appearance* of Calamity, in the Allotments appointed for the Godly, has really the *Nature* of a Blessing. It issues from fatherly Love, and will terminate in the richest Good. If *Joseph* is snatched from the Embraces of an indulgent Parent, and abandoned to Slavery in a foreign Land; it is in order to save the holy Family, from perishing by Famine; and to preserve "the Seed, in whom all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed." If he falls into the deepest Disgrace, it is on purpose that he may rise to the highest Honours. Even the Confinement of the Prison, by the unsearchable Workings of Providence, opens his Way to the Right-hand of the Throne itself.—Let the most afflicted Servant of Jesus, wait the final Upshot of Things. He will *then* discover the apparent Expediency of all those Tribulations; which *now*, perhaps, he can hardly admit, without Reluctance; or suffer, without some Struggles of Dissatisfaction. Then, the gushing Tear, and the heaving Sigh, will be turned into Tides of Gratitude, and Hymns of holy Wonder.

IN the mean time, let no audacious Railer, presumptuously impeach the Divine Procedure; but, adoring where we cannot comprehend, let us expect the *Evolution* of the mysterious Plan.

Then,

Then, shall every Eye perceive; that the seeming Labyrinths of Providence, were the most *direct* and *compendious* Way; to effect his general Purposes of Grace, and to bring about each One's particular Happiness\*. — Then, also, shall it be clearly shewn, in the Presence of applauding Worlds; Why, Virtue pined in Want, while Vice rioted in Affluence. Why, amiable Innocence so often dragged the Dungeon *Chain*, while horrid Guilt trailed the *Robe* of State. — That Day of universal Audit, that Day of everlasting Retribution, will not only *vindicate*, but *magnify*, the whole Management of Heaven. The august Sessions shall close with this unanimous, this glorious Acknowledgement: “Though *Clouds and Darknefs*, “impenetrable by any human Scrutiny, were “sometimes *round about* the supreme Conductor of Things; yet *Righteousness* and “*Judgment* were the constant *Habitation* of his “*Seat*†; the invariable Standard of all his Administrations.” — Thus (if I may illustrate the grandest Truths, by inferior Occurrences) while we view the Arras, on the Side of *least Distinction*,

\* — — — The moral World,

Which, though to Us it seems embroil'd, moves on  
In higher Order; fitted, and impell'd  
By Wisdom's finest Hand, and issuing all  
In gen'ral Good.

THOMAS. WINT. l. 586.

† Psal. xcvi. 2.

*finction*, it is void of any elegant Fancy; without any nice Strokes of Art; nothing but a confused Jumble of incoherent Threads. No sooner is the Piece beheld in its *proper Aspect*, but the suspected Rudeness vanishes, and the most curious Arrangement takes place. We are charmed with Designs of the finest Taste, and Figures of the most graceful Form. All is shaped with Symmetry; all is clad in Beauty.

THE *Goodness* of God is most eminently displayed in the Skies.—Could we take an understanding Survey, of whatever is formed by the Divine Architect, throughout the whole Extent of *material* Things; our Minds would be transported with their Excellencies, and our Tongues echo back that great Encomium, They are “good, very good\*.” Most *beautiful*† in themselves; contrived by unerring Wisdom, and executed with inimitable Skill. Most *useful*† in their Functions; exactly fitting the Places they fill, and completely answering the Purposes

\* Gen. i. 31.

†† This perfect Beauty, and admirable Utility of the Universe, and all its Parts, have been very highly, and very justly extolled, by the ancient Inquirers into Nature. And was, indeed, an illustrious Scene, spread before the Sages of the Heathen World; wherein to contemplate the Goodness, and the Glories of the Supreme Being.—It was nobly said by a Pagan Philosopher, on this Occasion; *That GOD, when he undertook the Work of Creation transform'd Himself into Love.*—But he need not

poses for which they were intended.—All the Parts of the inanimate Creation proclaim, both by their intrinsic and relative Excellencies, the all-diffusive Beneficence of their Maker.

How much more wonderful are the Displays of Divine Indulgence, in the Worlds of Life! Because, dead Matter is incapable of Delight; therefore, the gracious Creator has raised innumerable Ranks of *perceptive Existence*. Such as are qualified to taste his Bounty, and enjoy each a Happiness suited to its peculiar State. With this View, He furnished the Regions of inferior Nature, with an Order and a Series of sensitive Beings. The *Waters* teem with Shoals of finny Inhabitants. The *dry Land* swarms with Animals of every Order. The Dwellings of the *Firmament*, are occupied by Multitudes of winged People. Not so much as a *green Leaf*, Philosophers say, but lodges, and accommodates, its puny animalcule Tenants\*.—

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not transform Himself into this amiable Principle; for “*God is Love* ;” as was much more nobly said by One, whom that *Philosopher* would have termed a *Barbarian*. 1 John iv. 8.

\* A very celebrated Poet, in a beautiful Paragraph on this Subject, informs his Readers, That all Nature swarms with Life. In subterranean *Cells*, the Earth heaves with vital Motion. Even the hard *Stone*, in the very inmost Recesses of its impenetrable Citadel, holds Multitudes of animated Inhabitants. The *Pulp* of mellow Fruit, and all the Productions of the Orchard, feed the invisible Nations.



And wherefore this Diversity, this Profusion of living Creatures; flying the Air, treading the Ground, and gliding through the Paths of the Sea? For this most glorious Reason—That the eternal Sovereign may exercise his superabundant Goodness; that his *Table* may be furnished, with Millions and Millions of *Guests*; that he may fill, every Hour, every Moment, their Mouths with Food, or their Hearts with Gladness.

BUT, what a small Theatre are three or four *Elements*, for the Operations, of JEHOVAH'S Bounty! His magnificent Liberality, scorns such scanty Limits. If you ask, Wherefore has He created *all Worlds*, and replenished them with

Nations. Each *Liquid*, whether of acid Taste, or milder Relish, abounds with various Forms of sensitive Existence. Nor is the pure *Stream*, or transparent *Air*, without their Colonies of unseen People.—In which Constitution of Things, we have a wonderful Instance, not only of the Divine Goodness to those minute Beings, in giving them a *Capacity* for animal Gratifications; but of his tender Care for Mankind, in making them *imperceptible* to our Senses.

— These, conceal'd

By the kind Art of forming Heav'n, escape

The grosser Eye of Man: For, if the Worlds

In Worlds inclos'd should on his Senses burst;

From Gates ambrosial, and the nectar'd Bowl,

He'd turn abhorrent; and, in dead of Night,

When Silence sleeps o'er all, be stunn'd with Noise.

THOMSON'S *Summer*.

with an unknown Multiplicity of Beings; rising, one above another, in an endless Gradation of still richer Endowments, and still nobler Capacities? The Answer is—For the Manifestation of his own Glory, and especially for the *Communication* of his inexhaustible Beneficence\*.—The great Creator could propose no Advantage to Himself. His Bliss is incapable of any Addition. “Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever the Earth and the World were made,” He was supremely happy, in his own independent and all-sufficient Self. His grand Design therefore, in erecting so many stately Fabrics; and peopling them with so many Tribes of Inhabitants; was, To *transfuse* his exuberant Kindness, and impart Felicity in all its Forms. Ten Thousand Worlds, stocked with Ten thousand times Ten thousand Ranks, of sensitive and intelligent

\* A sacred Writer, considering this delightful Subject; and confining his Observation, within the narrower Limits of his own Country; cries out, with a Mixture of Amazement and Gratitude; *How great is his Goodness, and how great is his Beauty!*—Who then can forbear being lost in Wonder, and transported with Delight; when he extends his Survey, to those infinitely more copious Communications of Divine Bounty; which, like salutary and refreshing Streams, run through all Worlds; and make, not only the little Valleys of a single Kingdom, but the Immensity of Creation laugh and sing? Zech. ix. 17.

ligent Existence, are so many spacious Gardens; which, with Rivers of communicated Joy, this ever-flowing Fountain waters continually.

BOUNDLESS \*, and (which raises our Idea of this Divine Principle, to the very highest Degree of Perfection) disinterested \* Munificence! How *inexpressibly amiable* is the Blessed God, considered in this charming Light! Is it possible to conceive any Excellence, so adorable and lovely; as infinite Benevolence, guided by unerring Wisdom, and exerting Almighty Power, on purpose to make a whole Universe happy?—O my Soul, what an *irresistible Attractive* is here! What a most worthy Object, for thy most fervent Affection! Shall now every glittering Toy, become a Rival to this transcendently beneficent Being, and rob Him of thy Heart?—No. Let his all-creating Arm teach thee, to trust in the Fulness of his Sufficiency:—Let his all-superintending Eye incline thee, to acquiesce in the Dispensations of his Providence:—And let his Bounty; so freely vouchsafed; so amply diffused; induce thee to *love* Him, with all the Ardor of a grateful and ad-

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\*\* In this Sense, *There is none good, but One, that is GOD.* None universally and essentially good. None, whose Goodness extends itself, in an infinite *Variety* of Blessings, to *every* capable Object; or, who always dispenses his Favours, from the *sole* Principle of *free* and disinterested Benevolence.

mining Soul: induce thee to *serve* Him, not with a joyless Awe, or slavish Dread, but with unfeigned Alacrity; and a delightful Complacency.

If the Goodness of God is so admirably seen, in the Works of Nature, and the Favours of Providence; with what a noble Superiority, does it *even triumph*, in the *Mystery of Redemption*\*. Redemption, is the brightest Mirror, in which to contemplate this most lovely Attribute of the Deity. Other Gifts, are only as *Mites* from the Divine Treasury; but Redemption opens, I had almost said exhausts, all the *Stores* of Indulgence and Grace. Herein,

God  
In this, and in other Parts of the *Contemplations*, the Reader will observe; (That the Attributes of the Deity are represented, as shining with more distinguished Lustre, in the Wonders of *Redemption*, than in the Works of *Creation*. If such Remarks should seem to be unprecedented, or to stand in Need of a Vindication; permit me to subjoin the Sentiments of a great Critic, equally versed in both those sublime Theories.—“ In a perfect Orator, he says, *Tully* requires some Skill in the Nature of heavenly Bodies; because his Mind will become more extensive and unconfined; and, when He descends to treat of human Affairs, He will both think and write in a more exalted and magnificent Manner. For the same Reason, that excellent Master would have recommended the Study of those great and glorious Mysteries, which *Revelation* has discovered to Us; to which the noblest Parts of this System of the World are as much inferior, as the Creature is less excellent than the Creator.” *Specul. Vol. VIII. No 633.*



"God commandeth his Love\*" not only manifests, but sets it off, as it were, with every bright and grand Embellishment: manifests in so stupendous a Manner, that it is beyond Parallel; beyond Thought; above all Blessing and "Praise."—Was He not thy Son, Everlasting God, thy *only* Son; the Son of thy Bosom from eternal Ages; the highest Object of thy complacential Delight? Was not thy Love to this adorable Son, incomparably greater than the tenderest Affection of *Any*, or the united Affections of *All*, mortal Parents? Was not the blessed Jesus more illustrious in Excellency, than all Angels; more exalted in Dignity, than all Heavens? Yet didst thou resign Him, for poor Mortals; for vile Sinners!—Couldst thou see him descend, from his Royal *Throne*; and take up his Abode, in the sordid *Stable*? See him forego the *Homage* of the Seraphim; and stand exposed to the reproachful *Indignities*, of an insolent Rabble? See Him arraigned at the Bar, and sentenced to Death; numbered with Malefactors, and nailed to the Gibbet; bathed in his own innocent Blood, and pouring out his Soul in Agonies of Sorrow?—Could the Father, the Father *himself*, with unknown Philanthropy\*, say? "It shall, it shall, be so!"

"My Pity to rebellious Man pleads, and pre-  
P<sup>2</sup> "vails.

\* Rom. v. 8.

+ Philanthropy, that is, Loving-kindness to Man.

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"vails. Awake, therefore, O *Sword\**, edged with divine Wrath. Awake; and be sheathed in that *immaculate* Breast; pierce that *dearly beloved* Heart. I am content, that my Son endure the Sharpness of Death, rather than sinful Mortals perish for ever."—Incomprehensible Love! May it henceforward, be the favourite Subject of my *Meditation*; more delightful to my musing Mind, than Applause to the ambitious Ear! May it be the darling Theme of my *Discourse*; sweeter to my Tongue, than the Droppings of the Honeycomb to my Taste! May it be my choicest *Comfort*, through all the Changes of Life; and my reviving *Cordial*, even in the last Extremities of Dissolution itself!

A *PROPHET* contemplating, with a distant Survey, this unexampled Instance of Almighty Love, is wrapt into a *Transport* of *Devotion*. At a Loss for proper Acknowledgements, he calls upon the whole Universe to aid his labouring Breast, and supply his Lack of Praise. *Sing melodiously, ye vaulted Heavens; exult, and even leap for Gladness, thou comberous Earth; ye Mountains, break your long Silence, and burst into Peals of loudest Acclamation\**; for the LORD, by this precious Gift, and this

\* Zech. xiii. 7.

† *Isa.* xlix. 13.—I have not adhered to our common

this great Salvation, *hath comforted his People.*  
 —A *sacred Historian* hath left it upon Record;  
 that, at the first Exhibition of this ravishing  
 Scene, there was with the Angel, who brought  
 the blessed Tidings, a Multitude of the hea-  
 venly Host; praising God, and making the  
 Concave of the Skies resound with their Hal-  
 lelujahs. At the Dawn of the Sun of Righte-  
 ousness, when He was beginning to rise with  
 Healing in his Wings, the *Morning Stars* sang  
 together, and all the *Sons of GOD* shouted  
 for Joy.—And shall *Man*, whom this gracious  
 Dispensation principally respects; shall *Man*,  
 who is the Centre of all these gladdening Rays;  
 shall He have no Heart to adore, no Anthem  
 to celebrate, This

*Love without End, and without Measure Grace?*

P 3

How

mon Translation, but endeavoured to preserve, somewhat  
 more faithfully, the noble *Pathos*, and inimitable *Energy*,  
 of the sacred Original.—The Love of God, manifested in  
 a Divine and dying Saviour, is a Blessing of such incon-  
 ceivable Richness; as must render all Acknowledgments  
*flat*, and all Encomiums *languid*. Yet, I think, the most  
 poetical and most emphatical Celebration of that unspeak-  
 able Instance of Goodness, is contained in this rapturous  
 Exclamation of the Prophet. Which intimates, with a  
 wonderful Majesty of Sentiment, that even the whole  
 Compass of the *inanimate Creation*; could it be sensible of  
 the Benefit, and capable of Delight; would express its  
*Gratitude*, in all these Demonstrations of the most lively  
 and exuberant Joy.

## 166 CONTEMPLATIONS ON

How *pure* is the State of the Sky, and how *clear* its Aspect! Clearer than the limpid Stream; purer than the transparent Crystal; and more curiously fine, than the polished Mirror. That *stately Cieling*; fretted with Gold; and stretched to an Extent of many Millions of Leagues; is not disfigured with a single Flaw. That *azure Canopy*; embroidered with Stars, and spacious enough to form a Covering for unnumbered Worlds; is without the least Spot or Wrinkle.—Yet this, even this, will scarce yield us, so much as a faint Representation of the *Divine Purity*. God, is a God of matchless and transcendent Excellency. His Ways are Uprightness itself. His Counsels and Words are the very Sanctity of Wisdom and of Truth. The *Laws*, which he has given to universal Nature; are exquisitely contrived; and beyond all Possibility of Improvement. The *Precepts*, which He has appointed for the human Race; are a complete Summary, of all that is honourable in itself, and perfective of the rational Mind.—Not the least *Oversight*, in planning a Series of Events for all Futurity. Not the least Mal-administration, in managing the Affairs of every Age, since Time began; and of every Nation, under the whole Heavens.—Pardon these disparaging Expressions. A *negative* Perfection is far, far beneath thy Dignity,



Dignity, *O Thou most Highest* \*. In all these Instances; in all thy Acts, and all thy Attributes; Thou art not only holy, but *glorious in Holiness*."

So inconceivably holy is the LORD GOD of Hosts, that He sees *Defilement* even in the *Brightness*

\* *O Thou most Highest*.—This Expression occurs more than once, in the Psalms used by the Established Church. It is, I think, one of those *Beauties*, which, because often exhibited, generally escape our Notice. It is a *Superlative* formed on a Superlative; and, though not strictly conformable to grammatical Rules, is nobly superior to them all.—The Language seems to be sensible of its own Deficiency; when the incomprehensible JEHOVAH is addressed, or celebrated. Oppressed, as it were, with the Glories of the Subject, it labours after a *more emphatical* manner of Diction, than the ordinary Forms of Speech afford.—It is, if I rightly judge, one of those daring and happy Peculiarities of a masterly Genius, which MR. POPE so finely describes; and, while he describes, exemplifies:

Great Wits sometimes may gloriously offend,  
And rise to Faults true Critics dare not mend;  
From vulgar Bounds with brave Disorder part,  
And snatch a Grace beyond the Reach of Art.

*Essay on Criticism.*

St. Paul's Expression (*Eph. iii. 8.*) is a beautiful Passage of the like Nature; which our Translators have very properly rendered; *Less than the least of all Saints*.—In *Phil. i. 23.* is another Instance of the same Kind. But here the *English* Version fails. *Far better* is extremely flaccid, compared with the *nervous* Original. And I greatly question, whether it is possible to translate the Sentence, with equal Conciseness, and with equal Spirit.

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*Brightness* of the Firmament. The living Sapphire of the Heavens, before his Majesty, loses its Lustre. *Yea, the Stars* (though the most pure and resplendent Part of the Heavens) *are not pure in his Sight.* How much less *Man*, who in his fallen and depraved State, is but as a *Worm*, that crawls in the corrupted Carcase; and the *Son of Man*, who by reason of his manifold actual Impurities, is too justly compared to an *Insect*, that wallows amidst Stench and Putrefaction \*?—Is there not then abundant

\* *Job. xxv. 5, 6.* I submit it to the Judgment of the Learned, Whether this is not the true Meaning of the Text.—It may not, perhaps, recommend itself to the *Squeamishly nice* Critic; or to those Persons who dream of, I know not what, *Dignity* in our fallen Nature. But it seems, in Preference to every other Interpretation, *suitable* to the sacred Context; and is far, far from being *injurious* to the Character of that apostate Race, which is “altogether become abominable,” and “is as an unclean Thing.”—On this Supposition, there is not only an apparent, but a very striking Contrast, between the Purity of GOD, and the Pollution of Man. The *Purity* of the most high GOD, which outshines the Moon, and eclipses the Stars; the *Pollution* of degenerate Man, which, exclusive of a Saviour, would render him as loathsome to the all-seeing Eye, as the vilest Vermin are in ours.—Without assigning this Sense to the Passage, I cannot discern the Force of the *Antithesis*, nor indeed the *Propriety* of the Sentiment. Worms, in the general, give us an Idea of *Meanness* and *Infirmity*; not of *Defilement* and *Impurity*; unless they are Insects, of such

abundant Cause, for the most irreproachable and eminent of Mankind, to renounce all arrogant Pretensions; to lay aside every assuming Air; to take nothing but *Shame* and *Confusion* to themselves? A holy Prophet, and a holy Prince, felt such humbling Impressions, from a Glimpse of the uncreated Purity. *I abhor myself in Dust and Ashes\**, was the Declaration of the one: *I am a Man of unclean Lips†*, the Confusion of the other.—Should not this teach us all, to adore the Divine Mercies, for that precious *purifying Fountain‡*; which was foretold from the Foundation of the World; but was opened at the awful Juncture, when knotty Whips tore the Flesh; when ragged Thorns mangled the Temples; when sharpened Nails cut fresh Sluices for the crimson Current; when the Gash of the Spear completed the dreadful Work, and *forthwith flowed there*, from the wounded Heart, *Blood and Water?* ESPE-

such a particular Kind, and considered in some noisome Circumstances. The two Words of the Original are evidently used in this Signification by *Moses* and *Isaiah*. By the one, to denote the Vermin that devoured the *putrefied Manna*; by the other, to express the Reptiles, which swarm in the Body that sees *Corruption*. *Exod.*

*xvi. 20. Isa. xiv. 11.*

\* *Job xlii. 6.* † *Isa. vi. 5.*

‡ *In that Day there shall be a Fountain, opened to the House of David and to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, for Sin and Uncleannefs. Zech. xiii. 1.*

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ESPECIALLY, since God himself saw no Blemish in his *dear Son*. *He looketh to the Moon, and it shineth not*: yet his all-penetrating and jealous Eye, discerned nothing amiss, nothing defective, in our glorious Redeemer. Nothing amiss? He bore this most illustrious Testimony, concerning his holy Child JESUS: "In Him I am *pleased*; I am *well pleased*; I acquiesce, with intire Complacency, and with the highest Delight, in his Person; his Undertaking; and the whole Execution of his Office."—How should this Thought, enliven our Hopes; while the other, mortifies our Pride? Should not our Hearts spring within us, and even leap for Joy; at the repeated Assurance given us by Revelation, that such a divinely excellent Person is our Mediator? What apparent Reason has every Believer, to adopt the blessed Virgin's Exclamation! "*My Soul doth magnify the LORD* for his transcendent Mercy; and *my Spirit rejoices*, not in wide extended Harvests, waving over my fertile Glebe\*; not in Armies vanquished, and leaving the peculiar Treasure of Nations for my Spoil\*; but in an infinitely richer, nobler

\* \* The inspired Penman, from these Two Occasions of distinguished Joy, sets forth the incomparably greater *Delight*, which arises from the Gift of a Saviour, and the Blessing of Redemption. *Isa. ix. ver. 3.* compared with *ver. 6.*



"nobler Blessing, even in *GOD my Saviour.*"  
 —That a Person so sublime and perfect, has vouchsafed to become my *Surely*: to give Himself for my *Ransom*, in the World below; and act as my *Advocate*, in the Royal Presence above: yea, to make my *Recovery*, the Reward of his Sufferings; my final Felicity, the Honour of his mediatorial Kingdom!

When an innumerable Multitude\* of Bodies, many of them more than a *Hundred Thousand Miles* in Diameter†, are set all in Motion:—when the Orbits, in which they perform their periodical Revolutions, are extended at the Rate of several Hundreds of *Millions*:—when each has a *distinct* and separate Sphere, for finishing his vast Circuit:—when no one knows, what it is to be cramped; but each most *freely expatiates*, in his unbounded Career:—when every one is placed, at such an *immense Remove* from each other; that they appear to their respective Inhabitants, only as so many Spots of

\* This refers, not only to the Planets which pass and repass about our Sun, but also to the other Planetary Worlds, which are supposed to attend the several fixed Stars.

† The Diameter of *Jupiter* is calculated at 130,630 Miles, while his Orbit is reckoned to consist of 895,134,000. Which Computation, according to the Maxims of Astronomy, and the Laws of Proportion may, as is taken for granted in the Contemplations, be applied to other Planets revolving round other Suns.

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of Light. How astonishing must be the Expanse, which yields Room for all those mighty Globes, and their widely-diffused Operations! To what prodigious Lengths, did the Almighty Builder stretch his Line, when He marked out the stupendous Platforms. I wonder at such immeasurable Extent. My very Thoughts are lost, in this Abyss of Space. But, be it known to Mortals; be it never forgot by Sinners; that, in all its most surprising Amplitude, it is *small*, it is *scanty*, compared with the Bounty and the Mercy of its Maker.

His *Bounty* is absolutely without Limits\*, and without End. The most lavish Generosity cannot exhaust, or even diminish, his Munificence. O! all ye Tribes of Men; or rather, all ye Classes of intelligent Creatures; ye are not streightened in the *Liberality* of your ever-blessed Creator; be not streightened in your own

Ex-

\* By *Bounty*, I mean, not the actual Exercise, or the sensible Effects, of the Excellency in the Deity. These are, and always *must be*, through the immense Perfection of the Attribute, and the necessary Scantiness of the Recipient, bounded. But, I would be understood, as speaking of the Divine *Power* and the Divine *Will*, to exert Divine Beneficence. These can have no real, no imaginable Limits. These, after a Profusion of Blessings, distributed to unnumbered Worlds, continued through unnumbered Ages, must *still* have more to bestow; for ever have more to bestow; *infinitely* more to bestow, than it is possible for Creation itself to receive.

petitions. "Open your Mouth wide, and  
 "He shall fill it," with copious and continual  
 Draughts from the Cup of Joy. Your God,  
 on whom is your whole Dependence, is more  
 than able; is more than willing, to "supply  
 "all your Need, according to his Riches in  
 Glory."—When the LORD JEHOVAH is the  
 "Giver, and his Grace \* the Gift; let your  
 Wishes be unbounded, and your Cravings in-  
 satiable. All that created Beings can possibly covet,  
 is but a very small Pittance of that unknown  
 Happiness, which the Everlasting Benefactor is  
 ready to bestow. Suppose every charitable  
 Disposition, which warms the Hearts of the  
 human Race, added to those more enlarged  
 Affections, which glow in heavenly Bosoms;  
 what were they all, even in their highest Exer-  
 cise, compared with the Benignity of the Divine  
 Nature?—Bless me then, Thou eternal Source  
 of Love; bless all that reverence thy holy  
 Name; according to thy own most profuse  
 Goodness. Whose great Prerogative it is, to  
 disdain all Measure. O! bless us, in propor-

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tion

\* 2 Cor. ix. 8. GOD is able to make all Grace abound  
 towards you, that ye, having all Sufficiency in all Things,  
 may abound to every good Work.—How beautiful, and  
 emphatical, is this Description! Inferior to nothing, but  
 that Extent of Ability, and those Riches of Liberality,  
 which it so eloquently celebrates. Does it not exhaust all  
 the Powers of Language; while it attempts to give us a  
 Specimen, of the Munificence of the LORD?

tion to that Grace; the Richness of which (unutterable by the Tongues of Men, and of Angels) was once *spoken* in the Groans, and *written*, in the Wounds, of thy expiring Son!

SPACIOUS indeed are these Heavens! Where do they begin? Where do they end? What is their Extent? Can Angels answer my Question? Have Angels travelled the vast Circuit? Can Angels measure the Bounds of Space? No; 'tis boundless, 'tis unknown, 'tis amazing all.—How charming then to reflect, That the *Mercy* of GOD is "greater than the Heavens;" is more extensive than the Dimensions of the Sky. Transporting Reflection! Let me indulge Thee once more\*. Let me think over the delightful Displays of this lovely Attribute; and, while I admire the *Torphies* of forgiving Goodness, add one to the Number.—With what amiable

\* *Once more* refers to Page 112. of *Reflections on a Flower-Garden*.—The following Pages to, to the 179th, exhibit a *digressive* View of the Divine Mercy. I thought it proper to apprise my Reader of this Excursion; though, I hope, it will be needless to offer an Apology, for enlarging upon a Theme incomparably joyous. Who can complain of *Tediousness*, while I speak Consolation to distressed, and Recovery to ruined Creatures? The Divine Mercy is the sole Fountain of all our present and future Blessings. In Conformity to this benign Attribute, human Hopes arise, and human Felicity flows. Who, therefore, can be weary of *viewing* and *reviewing*; when the Lengths and Breadths of forgiving Grace, are the ravishing Prospect?



amiable and affecting Colours, is this represented in the *Parable of the Prodigal*! What could induce that foolish Youth, to forsake his Father's House? Had he not been tenderly cherished by the good Parent; and loaded with Benefits, from his indulgent Hand? Were not the Restraints, of Parental Government, an easy Yoke? or rather, a *Preservative from Ruin*? Notwithstanding every endearing Obligation, he revolts from his Duty; and launches into such scandalous Irregularities, as were dishonourable to his Family, and destructive to himself.—When Necessity, not Choice, but sharp Necessity drove him to a submissive Return; does the injured Father stand aloof, or shut his Doors? Quite the Reverse. He espies him, while he is yet a *great Way off*; and, the Moment he beholds the profligate Youth, *He has Compassion on Him*. His Bowels yearn; they “found like an Harp,” touched with Notes divinely soft. He never once thinks of his ungracious Departure, and infamous Debaucheries. Pity, parental Pity, passes an Act of Oblivion; and, in one Instant, cancels a Series of long-continued Provocations.—So strong are the Workings of fatherly Affection; that he is almost impatient to embrace the naked and destitute Wretch, the Son's Pace is slow, *He arose and came*; the Father's is swift, He sprung forth (aged as he was) and ran. And is there a single Frown in his

Brow, or one upbraiding Word on his Tongue? — Instead of loathing the sordid Creature, or reproaching him for his odious Excesses; he *falls* on his *Neck*, clasps him in his Arms, and hugs him to his Bosom. Instead of disowning the riotous Spendthrift, or rejecting him for his undutiful Behaviour; He receives and welcomes him with *Kisses* of Delight. He rejoices, at his Return from Extravagance and Vice; as he formerly rejoiced, on the Day of his Nativity. — When this Companion of Harlots opens his Mouth, *before he speaks, the Father hears.* He interrupts him, in the midst of his intended Speech. The Overflowings of his compassionate Heart can brook no Delay. He seems to be *uneasy* himself, till he has made the afflicted Penitent *glad*, with the Assurance of his Acceptance, and the choicest of his Favours. — While the poor abashed Offender seeks nothing more, than not to be abhorred; he is thoroughly reconciled, and honoured before the whole Family. While he requests no other Indulgence, than only to be treated as the *meanest* *Servant*; he is cloathed with the *best Robe*; he is feasted with the *fatted Calf*; he is carressed as the Dearest of Children. — Was there ever so bright and winning a Picture, of the tenderest Mercy; most freely vouchsafed; even to the most unworthy of Creatures? Yet *thus*, my Soul; and *thus*, my Fellow-sinner; will

will the LORD God of everlasting Compassions receive us; if, sensible of our Misery, and thirsting for Salvation, we turn to him through JESUS CHRIST.

*WHERE Sin has abounded, says the Proclamation from the Court of Heaven, Grace doth much more abound.*—*Manasseh* was a Monster of Barbarity; for He caused his own Children to pass through the Fire, and filled *Jerusalem* with innocent Blood. *Manasseh* was an Adept in Iniquity; for He not only multiplied, and to an extravagant Degree, his own sacrilegious Impieties; but He poisoned the Principles, and perverted the Manners of his Subjects, *making them to do worse than the most detestable of the Heathen Idolaters* \*. Yet, through this super-abundant Grace, He is humbled; He is reformed; and becomes a Child of forgiving Love, an Heir of immortal Glory.—Behold that bitter and bloody Persecutor *Saul*; when, breathing out Threatenings†,

Q 3

and

\* See 2 Chron. xxxiii.

† Acts ix. 1. *Saul yet breathing out Threatenings and Slaughter.*—What a Representation is here of a Mind, mad with Rage, and abandoned to the fiercest Extremes of Barbarity! I scarce know, whether I am more shocked at the Prosecutor's savage Disposition, or charmed with the Evangelist's lively Description.—The Adverb *eti* seems referable to Chap. viii. ver. 3. and has, in this Connexion, a peculiar Force. The Havock he had committed, the inoffensive Families he had already ruined,

were

and bent upon Slaughter, he worried the Lambs, and put to Death the Disciples of Jesus. Who, upon the Principles of human Judgment, would not have pronounced *Him* a Vessel of Wrath, destined to unavoidable Damnation? Nay, would not have been ready to conclude; that, if there were heavier Chains, and a deeper Dungeon, in the World of Woe; they must surely be reserved, for such an implacable Enemy of true Godliness? Yet, (admire, and adore, the inexhaustible Treasures of Grace!) this *Saul*, is admitted into the goodly Fellowship of the Prophets; is numbered with the noble Army of Martyrs; and makes a distinguished figure, among the glorious Company of the Apostles.—The *Corinthians*, were flagitious even to a Proverb. Some of them wallowed in such abominable Vices, and habituated

were not sufficient to assuage his vengeful Spirit. They were only a *Taste*; which, instead of glutting the Blood-hound, made him more closely pursue the Track, and more eagerly pant for Destruction. He is *still* athirst for Violence and Murder. So eager and insatiable is his Thirst, that he even *breathes out* Threatening and Slaughter. His Words are Spears and Arrows, and his Tongue a sharp Sword. 'Tis as natural for him to *menace* the Christians, as to breathe the Air.—Nay, they *bleed* every Hour every Moment, in the Purposes of his rancorous Heart. It is only owing to Want of Power, that every Syllable he utters, every Breath he draws, does not deal about Deaths, and cause some of the innocent Disciples to fall.



habituated themselves to such outrageous Acts of Injustice, as were a Reproach to human Nature. Yet, even these Sons of Violence, and Slaves of Sensuality, “were washed; were sanctified; were Justified\*.” *Washed*, in the precious Blood of a dying Redeemer; *sanctified*, by the powerful Operations of the Blessed Spirit; *justified*, through the infinitely tender Mercies of a gracious God. Those, who were once the Burden of the Earth, are now the Joy of Heaven, and the Delight of Angels.

THERE is another Instance in Scripture, which most loudly publishes the sweetest of the Divine Names, *The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth; keeping Mercy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin†.* An Instance this, which exceeds all the former; which exceeds whatever can be imagined; which if I was to forget, the very Stones might cry out, and sound it in my Ears. I mean the Case of those Sinners, who murdered the *Prince of Peace*, and *LORD of Glory*.—These Men, could scarce have the Shadow of an Excuse for their Crime; hardly a Circumstance, to extenuate their Guilt. They were well acquainted with his exemplary Conversation; they had often heard his heavenly Doctrines; they were almost daily Spectators of

\* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

† Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

of his unequalled Miracles. They therefore had all possible Reason to *honour* Him, as the most illustrious of Beings; and to *receive* his Gospel, as the most inestimable of Blessings. Yet, notwithstanding all these engaging *Motives* to love Him, even above their own Lives; they seize his Person; asperse his Character; drag him before a heathen Tribunal; and extort a Sentence of Death, against Innocence and Holiness itself. Never was the *vilest Slave*, so contumeliously abused; nor the most *execrable Malefactor*, so barbarously executed. The Sun was confounded at the shocking Scene; and one cannot but wonder, how the avenging Lightnings could withhold their Flashes. The Earth trembled at the horrid Deed; and why, why did it not cleave asunder, and open a Passage, for such Blood-thirsty Miscreants, into the nethermost Hell? Shall *These* ever hope to obtain Forgiveness, from the righteous Judge? Shall not *These* be consigned over to inexorable Wrath, and the severest Torments? — O the miraculous Effects of Divine Grace! O the triumphant Goodness of God our Saviour! Many, even of *these* impious Wretches, at the Descent of the Holy Ghost, were convinced of their miserable State; were wounded with penitential Remorse; fled to the Sanctuary of the Cross; had their Pardon ratified by the baptismal Seal; and, continuing in the Apostles

Doctrine,

Doctrine, were made Partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven. Where they now shine, as so many everlasting *Monuments* of most distinguished *Mercy*; and receive Beatitude past Utterance, from that very Redeemer, whom once "with wicked Hands they crucified and slew."

WELL might the Prophet cry out, with a pleasing Amazement; "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth Iniquity, and passeth by Transgression \*!"—Let all Flesh know assuredly; let all Flesh rejoice greatly; That with the LORD there is *such Mercy*, and with his CHRIST *such plentiful Redemption*.—And O! for the Voice of an Arch-Angel, to circulate the Glad-Tidings through the Universe. That the *American* Savage, as well as the *European* Sage, may learn the *exceeding Riches of Grace* in Christ. Through whose infinitely satisfying Propitiation, all Manner of Sin, Barbarity, and Blasphemy, are freely forgiven unto Men.

WHAT a grand, and majestic *Dome*, is the Sky! Where are the *Pillars*, which support the stately Concave? What Art, most exactly true, balanced the Pressure? What Props, of insuperable Strength, sustain the Weight? How is that immeasurable Arch *upheld*, unshaken and unimpaired; while so many Generations of busy Mortals, have *sunk* and disappeared, as Bubbles upon the Stream?—If those

\* Mic. vii. 18.

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those Stars are of such an amazing Bulk; how are they also *fastened*, in their lofty Situation? By what Miracle in Mechanics, are so many Thousands of ponderous Orbs, kept from falling upon our Heads; kept from dashing, both the World to Pieces, and its Inhabitants to Death? Are they hung in golden, or adamantine, Chains? Rest they their enormous Load, on Rocks of Marble, or Columns of Brass?—No; they are *pendulous* in fluid Æther. Yet, are more immoveably *fixed*, than if the everlasting Mountains lent their Forests, for an Axle-Tree; or their Ridges, for a Basis. The Almighty Architect *stretches out the North*, and its whole starry Train, *over the empty Place*. He *hangs the Earth*, and all the ethereal Globes, *upon nothing*\*. Yet are their Foundations laid so sure, that they can “never be moved at any Time.”

No unfit Representation, to the *sincere* Christian, of his *final* Perseverance†: such as points  
out

\* Job. xxvi. 7.

† With regard to the *final Perseverance* of the true Believer; I am sensible, this Point is not a little controverted.—The Sentiments, which follow, are my steadfast Belief. It is by no means proper, in a Work of this Nature, to enter upon a Discussion of the Subject. Neither have I Room, so much as to hint, what might be urged for its Support.—Let my Reader observe, that I am far from delivering it, as essential to Christianity,



out the Cause, which effects it; and constitutes the Pledge, which ascertains it.—His Nature is all enfeebled. He is not able, of himself, to think a good Thought. He has no *visible* Safeguard, nor any Sufficiency of his own.

And or necessary to Salvation. Millions, of the very contrary Conviction, are, I doubt not, high in the Favour of God; and in a growing Meetness for his heavenly Kingdom. As I blame none for *rejecting*, none, I hope, will be offended with me for *espousing*, this particular Doctrine.—To be of different Opinions, at least in some inferior Instances, seems an unavoidable Consequence of our present State: where *Ignorance*, in Part, cleaves to the wisest Minds; and *Prejudice* easily besets the most impartial Judgments. This may turn to our common Advantage; and afford Room for the Display and Exercise of those *healing* Virtues, Moderation, Meekness, and Forbearance.—Let me only be permitted to ask, whether this Tenet does not evidently tend to establish the Comfort of the Christian, and to magnify the *Fidelity* of God our Saviour? Whether, far from Countenancing Sloth, or encouraging Remissness, to *know* that our Labour shall not be in vain, is not the most prevailing Inducement to *abound* in the Work of the LORD? 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Is any one inclined to examine the Reasons, which made the Author a Profelyte to this Persuasion? He may find them displayed in the Memorial, delivered by several select and eminent Divines of the Church of England, at the renowned Synod of *Dordt*.—(See *Acta Synod. Dordrech.* Par. II. Pag. 246. of the *Latin* Edition, published in a single Quarto Volume.)—Those, who have no Opportunity of consulting the Memoirs of that venerable Assembly; I would refer to the Works  
of

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And yet, whole Legions of formidable Enemies, are in a Confederacy to compass his Ruin. The *World*, lays unnumbered Snares for his Feet: the *Devil*, is incessantly urging the Siege by a Multitude of fiery Darts, or wily Temptations: the *Flesh*, like a perfidious Inmate under Colour of Friendship, and a specious Pretence of Pleasure, is always forward to betray his Integrity.—But, amidst all these threatening Circumstances, of personal Weakness, and imminent Danger, an invisible Aid is his Defence. “*I will uphold thee*, says the

“ blessed of the indefatigable and very learned *Turretin*, or to those of the candid and elegant *Wilsius*,—*Turret. Tom. II. Q. xvi. Witf. Oecon. Lib. III. Cap. xiii.*

The latest and fullest View of the Point, which I ever remember to have met with, in any of our *English* Writers, is in the *Lime-street Lectures*. Which are a Defence of Several most important Doctrines of the Gospel, and contained in two Octavo Volumes; the united Labours of nine modern Divines; most of whom, are well known to the World by their other evangelical and useful Writings. In those Lectures, the final Perseverance of the Saints, is very particularly stated; and, to my Apprehension at least, most satisfactorily Proved. The Arguments, usually urged against it, are impartially considered; and I cannot but think (with all due Deference to the Judgment of others) unanswerably confuted.

And here (not to swell this Note any farther) I shall only just hint, that the judicious *Hooker* (an Authority, perhaps, as weighty and unexceptionable as any that can well be produced) gives a solemn Attestation to this Tenet, in a short Discourse on the Perpetuity of Faith, subjoined to his *Ecclesiastical Polity*. Fol. Edit.

"blessed God, with the Right Hand of my  
 "Righteousness\*" Comfortable Truth! The  
 Arm, which fixes the Stars in their Orders,  
 and guides the Planets in their Course, is  
 stretched out to preserve the Heirs of Salvation.  
 "—My Sheep adds the great Redeemer, are  
 mine; and they shall never perish, neither shall  
 "any pluck them out of my Hand†" What  
 Words are these! And did they come from  
 Him, who hath all Power in Heaven, and on  
 Earth? And were they spoke to the weakest of  
 the Flock; to every unfeigned Follower of the  
 great Shepherd? Then, Omnipotence itself  
 must be *vanquished*; before they can be *de-  
 stroyed*, either by the Seductions of Fraud, or  
 the Assaults of Violence.

IF you ask therefore, What Security we have,  
 of enduring to the End, and continuing faithful  
 unto Death?—The very *same* that establishes  
 the Heavens, and settles the Ordinances of the  
 Universe. Can *these* be thrown into Confu-  
 sion‡? Then, may the true Believer draw back  
 unto Perdition. Can the Sun be dislodged  
 from his Sphere, and rush lawlessly through  
 the Sky? Then, and then only, can the  
 Faith of God's Elect|| be *finally* overthrown.  
 —Be of good Courage then, my Soul; rely on  
 those Divine Succours, which are so solemnly

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\* Isa. xli. 10.

† John x. 28.

‡ Jer. xxxi. 35, 36.

|| Tit. i. 8.

stipulated, so faithfully promised. Though thy Grace be languid, as the glimmering Spark; though the Overflowings of Corruption, threaten it with total Extinction; yet, since the great JEHOVAH has undertaken to cherish the dim Principle, "many Waters cannot quench it, nor all Floods drown it." Nay, tho' it were feeble as the *Smoking Flax*\*, Goodness and Faithfulness stand engaged, to augment

\* The *Tenderness* and *Faithfulness* of God to his People, are finely pictured by the Prophet *Isaiah*, Chap. xlii. Ver. 3. Which Passage, because of its rich Consolation, and uncommon Beauty, is deservedly adopted by St. *Matthew*, and ingrafted into the System of evangelical Truths.—*He will not himself break, nor suffer to be broken by any other, the bruised Reed; nor quench the smoking Flax.* Was it possible, to have chosen two more delicate, and expressive Representations?—Could any Image, be more significant of a very infirm, and enfeebled Faith; than the flexile *Reed*, that bends before every Wind? Which, besides its natural Weakness, is made abundantly weaker by being *bruised*: and so, is ready to fall in Pieces of itself.—Or could any Thing, with a more pathetical Exactness, describe the extreme Imbecility, of that other Principle of the Divine Life, *Love*? The State of the *Flax*, just beginning to burn, is liable to be put out by the least Blast: more liable still is the Wick of the Lamp, when it is not so much as kindled into a glimmering Flame, but only *breathing Smoke*, and uncertain whether it shall take Fire or no.—Yet true Faith, and heavenly Love, though subsisting amidst such pitiable Infirmities, will not be abandoned by their great Author; shall not be extinguished by any Temptations; but be maintained, invigorated, and made finally triumphant. *Matt. xii. 20.*



augment the Heat; to raise the Fire, and feed the Flame; till it beam forth, a Lamp of immortal Glory, in the Heavens.

As to the *Faithfulness* of a covenanting God, this may be emblematically seen, in the Stability of the heavenly Bodies, and the Perpetuity of their Motions\*.—Those that are *fixed* or *stationary*, continue unalterable in their grand Elevations. No injurious Shocks; no Violence of conflicting Elements; are able to displace those everlasting Hinges, on which dependent Worlds revolve. Through the whole Flight of Time, they recede not, so much as a Hair's Breadth, from the precise central Point of their respective Systems.—While the *Erratic*, or *Planetary*, perform their prodigious Stages, without any Intermiſſion, or the least Embarrassment. How soon, and how easily, is the most finished Piece of human Machinery disconcerted! But all the celestial Movements, are so nicely adjusted; all their Operations, so critically proportioned; and their mutual Dependencies, so strongly connected; that they prolong their beneficial Courses, throughout all Ages.—While *mighty Cities* are overwhelmed with Ruin, and their very Names lost in Oblivion: While *vast Empires* are swept from their Foundations, and leave not so much as a shadowy Trace of their ancient Magnificence:

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\* Psal. cxix. 89, 90.

cence : While *all terrestrial* Things are subject to Vicissitude, and fluctuating in Uncertainty: *These* are permanent in their Duration. *These* are invariable in their Functions. "Not one fail-  
 "eth."—Who doubts the constant Succession, of Day and Night; or the regular Returns, of Summer and Winter? And why, O! why shall we doubt the *Veracity* of God, or distrust the *Accomplishment* of his holy Word? Can the Ordinances of Heaven depart? Then only can God forget to be gracious; or neglect the Performance of his Promise.—Nay, our LORD gives us yet firmer Ground of Affiance. He affords us a surer Bottom for our Faith, than the *fundamental Laws* of the Universe. *Heaven and Earth*, He says, *shall pass away*; but my *Words shall not*, in a single Instance, or in one Title of their import, *pass away*. No : his sacred Word, whatever may obstruct it; whoever may oppose it; shall be fulfilled to the very uttermost.

O powerful Word ! How astonishing is its Efficacy ! When this Word was issued forth, a thousand Worlds emerged out of nothing. Should the mighty Orders be repeated, a thousand more would spring into Existence. By this Word, the vast System of created Things is *upheld*, in constant and immutable Perfection. Should it give Command, or cease to exert its Energy; the universal Frame would be  
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dissolved, and all Nature revert to her original Chaos. And this very Word is *pledged* for the Safety, the Comfort, the Happiness of the Godly. This inviolable, this Almighty Word, *speaks* in all the Promises of the Gospel. —How strangely infatuated are our Souls, that we should value it so little? What Infidels are we in fact, that we should depend upon it no more! Did it *create*, whatever has a Being; and shall it not *work* Faith, in our Breasts! Do unnumbered Worlds, owe their Support to this Word; and shall it not be sufficient, to buoy up our Souls in Troubles, or establish them in Trials? Is it the *Life* of the Universe, and shall it be a *dead* Letter to Mankind?

IF I wish to be heard, when I implore heavenly Blessings; is not *this Privilege* most clearly made over to my Enjoyment, in that well-known Text, “Ask, and it shall be given you \*?” —If I long for the Eternal Comforter, to dwell in my Heart, and sanctify my Nature; have I not an apparent Title of this *high Prerogative*, conferred in that sweet assertive Interrogation; “How much more shall your heavenly Father, give the Holy Spirit to those that ask him †?” —If I earnestly covet the inestimable Treasures, that are comprised in the great IMMANUEL’S Mediation; can I have a firmer Claim to the *noble Portion*, than is granted in that most

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precious.

\* Matt. vii. 7.

† Luke xi. 13.

precious Scripture; “Him that cometh to Me, “I will in no-wise cast out\*?”—What Assurance, of being interested in these unspeakable Mercies, would I desire? What *Form* of *Conveyance*; what *Deed of Settlement*; were it left to my own Option, should I choose? Here is the Word of a King? the King immortal and invisible; all whose Declarations † are Truth itself.—If a Monarch bestows Immunities on a Body of Men, and confirm them by an authentic Charter; no one controverts, no one questions, their Right to the Royal Favours. And why should we suspect the *Validity* of those glorious Grants, which are made by the everlasting Sovereign of Nature; which He has also *ratified* by an Oath, and *sealed* with the Blood of his Son?—Corporations may be disfranchised, and Charters revoked. Even Mountains may be removed, and Stars drop from their Spheres. But a Tenure, founded on the Divine Promise, is unalienably *secure*; is *lasting*, as Eternity itself.

WE have endeavoured to spell a *Syllable* of the eternal Name, in the ancient Manuscript of the Sky. We have caught a *Glimpse* of the

\* John vi. 37.

† — — — — If *these* fail,

The pillar'd Firmament is Rottennes,  
And Earth's Base built on Stubble.

MILT. *Comus*



the Almighty's Glory, from the Lustre of innumerable Stars. But, would we behold all his Excellencies, pourtrayed in *full* Perfection; and drawn to the very Life; let us attentively consider the REDEEMER.—I observe, there are some Parts of the Firmament, in which the Stars seem, as it were, to *cluster*. They are sown thicker, they lie closer, than usual; and strike the Eye, with redoubled Splendor. Like the Jewels on a Crown, they mingle their Beams; and reflect an Increase of Brillancy, on each other.—Is there not such an Assemblage, such a *Constellation* of the Divine Honours, most amiably effulgent in the Blessed JESUS?

Does not infinite *Wisdom* \* shine, with surpassing Brightness, in CHRIST? To the Making of a World, there was no Obstacle; but to the Saving of Man, there seemed to be unsurmountable Bars. If the Rebel is suffered to escape; where is the *inflexible Justice*, which denounces "Death as the Wages of Sin?" If the Offender is thoroughly pardoned; where is the *invincible Veracity*, which has solemnly declared, "The Soul that sinneth, shall die?" These awful Attributes are set in terrible Array; and, like an impenetrable Battalion, oppose the Salvation of apostate Mankind. Who can suggest a Method to *absolve* the traitorous Race; yet vindicate

\* See the next Note.

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vindicate the Honours of Almighty Sovereignty. This is an Intricacy, which, the most exalted of finite Intelligences, are unable to clear.—But, behold the *unsearchable Secret* revealed! revealed in the wonderful Redemption, accomplished by a dying Saviour! So plainly revealed, that “He who runs may read;” and even *Babes* understand, what Minds of the Deepest penetration could not contrive.—The Son of God, taking our Nature, obeys the Law, and undergoes Death, in our Stead. By this means, the threatened *Curse* is executed, in all its Rigour; and free *Grace* is exercised, in all its Riches. Justice maintains her Rights, and, with a steady Hand, administers impartial Vengeance; while Mercy dispenses her Pardons, and welcomes the repentant Criminal into the tenderest Embraces. Hereby, the seemingly thwarting Attributes are reconciled. The Sinner is saved, not only in *full Consistence*, with the Honour of the supreme Perfections; but to the most *illustrious Manifestation* of them all.

WHERE does the Divine *Power*\* so signally exert itself, as in the Cross of CHRIST, and in the  
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\* CHRIST, the Wisdom of GOD, and the Power of GOD. 1 Cor. i. 24.—To the Intent that now, unto the Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places, might be known by the Church (by the amazing Contrivance, and Accomplishment of its Redemption) the deep, extensive, and greatly diversified Wisdom of GOD. Eph. iii. 10.

Conquests of Grace?—Our LORD, in his lowest State of Humiliation, gained a more glorious Victory; than when, through the dividing Sea, and waste howling Wilderness, “He rode upon his Chariots and Horses of Salvation.” When his Hands were riveted, with Irons, to the bloody Tree; He disarmed Death of its Sting, and plucked the Prey from the Jaws of Hell. Then, even then, while he was crucified in *Weakness*, He vanquished the *Strong Man*, and subdued our most formidable Enemies. Even then, he spoiled Principalities; triumphed over the Powers of Darkness; and led Captivity captive.—Now he is exalted to his heavenly Throne, with what a prevailing Efficacy does his Grace go forth, “conquering, and to conquer!”—By this, the *Slaves* of Sin are rescued from their Bondage, and restored to the *Liberty* of Righteousness. By this, depraved Wretches, whose Appetites were *sensual*, and their Dispositions *devilish*; are not only renewed, but renewed after the Image of God, and made Partakers of a *Divine* Nature. Millions, Millions of lost Creatures are snatched, by the Interposition of Grace, like *Brands* from the Burning; and, translated into everlasting Mansions, shine brighter than the *Stars*, shine bright as the *Sun*, in the Kingdom of their Father.

Would you then see an incomparably more bright

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bright Display of the Divine Excellence, than the unspotted Firmament, the Spangles of Heaven, or the golden Fountain of Day exhibit? Contemplate JESUS of Nazareth. He is the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person. In his immaculate Nature; in his heavenly Tempers; in his most holy Life; the *moral Perfections* of the Deity are represented, to the highest Advantage\*.—Hark! how *Mercy*, with her charming Voice, speaks in all He utters. See! how *Benevolence* pours her choicest Stores, in all He does. Did ever Compassion look so amiably soft, as in those pitying Tears; which swelled his Eyes, and trickled down his Cheeks, to bedew the Rancour of his inveterate Enemies?—Was it possible for *Patience* to assume a Form so lovely; as that sweetly-winning Conduct, which bore the Contradiction of Sinners? Which intreated the Obstinate, to be reconciled; besought the Guilty, not to die?—In other Things, we may find some *scattered Rays* of JEHOVAH's Glory; but in CHRIST they are all collected and united. In CHRIST, they beam forth, with the strongest Radiance, with the most delightful Effulgence. *Out of Sion*, and

\* In this Sense, that Saying of our LORD is eminently true, *He that hath seen ME hath seen the FATHER.* John xiv. 9.



in Sion's great Redeemer, *hath GOD appeared in perfect Beauty.*

SEARCH then, my Soul, above all other Pursuits, search the Records of redeeming Love. Let these be the principal Objects of thy Study. Here employ thyself, with the most unwearied Assiduity.—*In these are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge* \*. *Such Wisdom*; as charms and astonishes the very Angels: Engages their closest Attention, and fills them with the deepest Adoration†. *Such Know-*

\* *Coloss.* ii. 3. Not a mean Degree, but a *Treasure*; not one Treasure, but *many*; not many only, but *all* Treasures, of true Wisdom, and saving Knowledge; are in CHRIST, and his glorious Gospel.—The transcendent *Excellency* of those Treasures seems to be finely intimated in that other Expression, *hid*; or *laid up*; with the utmost Care, and the greatest Safety. Not left at all Adventures, to be stumbled upon, by every giddy Wanderer; or to fall into the Arms of the yawning Sluggard; but, like Jewels of the brightest Lustre, or Riches of the highest Value, *kept in Store* to adorn and reward the diligent Searcher.

† This, I believe, is the *Import* of the Apostle's Language, though it is not a *literal* Translation of it, *1 Pet.* i. 12.—I never had such a lively Apprehension of the beautiful Significancy of the last Word in the Original, *parakapsai*; as when I have attended a Dissection of some Part of the animal Body. In order to discern the *Minutiae* of the admirable Frame; the latent Wonders of Art and Mechanism; the Eye is so sharpened, and its Application so *intensely bended*, as gives a very just *experimental*

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*Knowledge*; as qualifies the Possessor, if not for Offices of Dignity on Earth, yet for the most honourable Advancements in the Kingdom of Heaven. Disunited from which Knowledge, all Application is but elaborate Impertinence; and all Science, no better than pompos Ignorance. — These Records contain the faultless Model of Duty, and the noblest Motives to Obedience. Nothing so powerful, to work a lively Faith, and a joyful Hope; as an attentive Consideration of our LORD's unutterable Merits. Nothing so sovereign, to antidote the pestilential Influence of the World, and deliver our Affections from a Slavery to ignoble Objects; as an habitual Remembrance of his extreme Agonies. The genuine, the ever-fruitful *Source* of all *Morality*, is the unfeigned Love of CHRIST; and the Cross, the CROSS, is the appointed \* *Altar*, from which

we

*rimental* Comment on that expressive Phrase.—With such earnest Attention, is the everlasting Gospel contemplated, by the *Angelic* Orders! How much more, if it were possible, does it deserve the devout and incessant Consideration of *human* Minds? Since by *them*, it is not only to be speculated, as a bright and ravishing Display of the Divine Attributes; but to be applied to their fallen Nature, as a most benign Scheme of *recovering* Grace; as the sure and only Method of obtaining Life and Immortality.

\* And I, says our LORD, if I be lifted up from the Earth, and extended on the Cross, will draw all Men unto

we may fetch a Coal\*, to inkindle the sacred Fire.

*BEHOLD*, therefore, the *Man*; the matchless and stupendous Man; whose Practice was a Pattern of the most exalted Virtue, and his Person the Mirror of every Divine Perfection. Examine the Memoirs of his heavenly Temper, and exemplary Conversation. Contemplate that *Choir of Graces*, which were associated in his Mind, and shed the highest Lustre on all his Actions. Familiarize to thy Thoughts his instructive Discourses, and enter into the very Spirit of his refined Doctrines. That the Graces may be transfused into thy Breast, and the Doctrines transcribed in thy Life.—Follow Him to *Calvary's* horrid Eminence; to *Calvary's* fatal Catastrophe. Where Innocence, Dignity, and Merit, were *made perfect through Sufferings*: each shining, with all possible Splendor, through the tragical Scene; somewhat like his own radiant Bow, then glowing with the greatest Beauty, when appearing on the darkest Cloud.—Be thy most constant Attention fixed, on that lovely and sorrowful Spectacle. Behold the spotless Victim, nailed to the Tree, and stabbed to the Heart. Hear

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unto me: will give such a rich and transcendent Display of my Love, as shall constitute the most powerful and prevailing Attractive of theirs. *John xii. 32.*

† Alluding to *Isaiah vi. 6.*

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Him pouring out Prayers, for his Murderers; before He poured out his Soul, for Transgressors. See the Wounds, that stream with Forgiveness; and bleed Balm for a distempered World. O! See the Justice of the Almighty and his Goodness; his Mercy and his Vengeance; every *tremendous* and *gracious* Attribute manifested; manifested with *inexpressible* Glory, in that most *ignominious*, yet *grandest*, of Transactions.

SINCE God is so inconceivably great as these his marvellous Works declare;

*Since the great Sovereign sends Ten thousand Worlds,*

*To tell us, He resides above them all,*

*In Glory's unapproachable Recept\*;*

how

\* For 'this Quotation, and several valuable Hints, I acknowledge myself indebted to those beautiful and sublime Poems, intituled *Night-Thoughts*.—Of which I shall only say, That I receive fresh Pleasure, and richer Improvement, from every renewed Perusal. And, I think, I shall have Reason, to bless the indulgent Bestower of all Wisdom, for those instructive and animating Compositions, even in my last Moments. Than which, nothing can more emphatically speak their *superior* Excellence, nor give a more solid Satisfaction to their worthy Author.—Happy should I think myself, if these little Sketches of contemplative Devotion, might be honoured with the *most inferior* Degree of the same Success. Might receive a Testimony, not from the Voice of Fame, but from the dying Lips of some edified Christian.



how can We forbear hastening, with *Moses*, bowing Ourselves to the Earth, and worshiping?

O! what an honourable, as well as advantageous Employ, is Prayer!—*Advantageous*. By Prayer, We cultivate that improving Correspondence with JEHOVAH; We carry on that gladdening Intercourse with his SPIRIT, which must begin Here, in order to be completed in Eternity.—*Honourable*. By Prayer, we have Access to that mighty Potentate; whose Sceptre sways universal Nature, and whose rich Regalia fill the Skies with Lustre. Prayer, places us in his Presence-Chamber; while “the Blood of Sprinkling,” procures us a gracious Audience.

SHALL I then *blush* to be found prostrate; before the Throne of Grace? Shall I be *ashamed* to have it known; that I offer up social Supplications in the Family, or am conscientious in observing my private Retirements? Rather, let me glory in this unspeakable Privilege. Let me reckon it the *noblest* Posture, to fall low on my Knees before his Footstool; and the *highest* Honour, to enjoy Communion with his most exalted Majesty.—Incomparably more noble, than to sit, in Person, on the triumphal Chariot; or to stand, in Effigy, amidst the Temple of Worthies.

Most inestimable, in such a View, is that

Promise; which so often occurs in the prophetic Writings, and is the crowning Benefit of the new Covenant, *I will be thy God* \*.—Will this supremely excellent, and Almighty Being, vouchsafe to be *my Portion*? To settle upon a poor Sinner, not the Heritage of a County; nor the Possession of the whole Earth; but his *own* ever-blessed *Self*? May I then, through his free condescending Grace, and the unknown Merits of his Son, look upon all these infinitely noble Attributes as my Treasure? May I regard the *Wisdom*, which superintends such a Multitude of Worlds, as my Guide; the *Power*, which produced, and preserves them in Existence, as my Guard; the *Goodness*, which, by an endless Communication of Favours, renders them all so many Habitations of Happiness, as *my exceeding great Reward*?—What a Fund of Felicity, is included in such a Blessing! How often does the *Israelitish* Prince exult in the Assurance, that this unutterable and boundless Good is his own? Interested in this, he bids Defiance to every Evil, that can be dreaded; and rests in certain Expectation of every Blessing, that can be desired. The *LORD* is my *Light*, and my *Salvation*; *whom then shall I fear*? The *LORD*, with an Air of Exultation, he repeats both his Affiance, and his Challenge, *is the Strength of my Life*; of whom

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\* Heb. viii. 10.

whom then shall I be afraid\*? Nothing so effectual, as this appropriating Faith, to inspire a Dignity of Mind, superior to transitory Trifles; or to create a Calmness of Temper, unalarmed by vulgar Fears, unappalled by Death itself.—*The LORD is my Shepherd*, says the same truly gallant and heroic Personage: *therefore shall I lack nothing*†. How is it possible, He should suffer Want, who has the All-sufficient Fulness for his Supply? So long as unerring Wisdom is capable of contriving the Means; so long as uncontrollable Power is able to execute them; such a One cannot fail of being safe and happy; whether he continue amidst the Vicissitudes of Time, or depart into the unchangeable Eternity.

HERE, let us stand a Moment, and humbly contemplate this great God, together with ourselves, in a relative View.—If we reflect on the Works of *material* Nature, their Number incomprehensible, and their Extent unmeasurable: each of them apart, so admirably framed; the Connexions of the Whole, so exquisitely regulated; and all derived, from one and the same glorious Agent—If we recollect the far more noble Accomplishments of elegant Taste, and discerning Judgment; of refined Affections, and exalted Sentiments; which are to be found, among the several Orders of *intelligent* Existence:

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\* Psal. xxvii. 1.

† Psal. xxiii. 1.

ence, and all of them flowing, in rich Emanations, from the one sole Fountain of intellectual Light. If we farther consider this Author of material Beauty, and moral Excellency, as a *Guardian*, a *Governor*, and *Benefactor*, to all his Creatures: supporting the whole System, and protecting each Individual, by an ever-watchful Providence; presiding over the minutest Affairs, and causing all Events to terminate in the most extensive Good; heaping, with unremitted Liberality, his Benefits upon every capable Object, and making the Circuit of the Universe a Seminary of Happiness—Is it possible for the human Heart, under such captivating Views, to be *indifferent* towards this most benign, most bountiful Original of Being and of Bliss? Can any be so immersed in Stupidity, as to say unto the Almighty—In the Language of an irreligious Temper, and licentious Life, to say? “Depart from Us; we implore not thy Favour; nor desire the Knowledge of thy Ways.”—Wonder, O *Heavens*! be amazed, O *Earth*! and let the Inhabitants of *both* express their Astonishment, at this unparalleled Complication of disingenuous, ungrateful, destructive Perverseness!

If we consider our *fallen* and *imperfect* State; frail in our Bodies; enfeebled in our Minds; in every Part of our Constitution, and in all

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the Occurrences of Life, "like a tottering Wall, or a broken Hedge.—If we survey our *indigent* and *infirm* State; without Holiness; without spiritual Strength; our Possession of present Conveniences, intirely dependent on God's sovereign Pleasure; yea, forfeited, justly forfeited, with every future Hope, by a thousand aggravated Iniquities.—If we add the various *Disasters* of our Condition; agitated as we are by tumultuous Passions; oppressed with dispiriting Fears; held in Suspense by a Variety of perplexing \* Cares: liable to Pains, and

\* *Perplexing*.—Those who read the original Language of the New Testament, are sufficiently apprised, that such is the *Significancy* of that benevolent Dissuasive, urged by our LORD, *mē merimnate*, *Matt. vi. 25.*—I beg Leave, for the Sake of the *unlearned* Reader, to observe; That our Translation, though for the most Part faithful and excellent, as here misrepresented our Divine Master's Meaning. *Take no Thought* for your Food, for your Raiment, for your bodily Welfare, is not only not the true Sense, but the very Reverse of the Scriptural Doctrine. We are required to take a *prudent* and *moderate* Thought, for the Necessaries of Life. The Sluggard, who neglects this decent Precaution, is severely reprimanded; is sent to one of the meanest Animals, to blush for his Folly, and learn Discretion from her Conduct, *Prov. vi. 6.* Our Saviour's Precept, and the exact Sense of his Expression, is, *Take no anxious Thought*; indulge no *perplexing* Care. No such Care, as may argue an unreasonable *Distrust* of Providence; or may *rend* and *tear* your Minds with distressing, with pernicious Solicitude.

and exposed to Troubles; Troubles from every Quarter; Troubles of every Kind — Can we amidst so many Wants, under such deplorable Infirmities, and subject to such distressful Accidents—can we be unconcerned, whether God's omnipotence, irresistible, all conducting Hand be *against* Us? Imagination itself shudders at the Thought!—Can we rest satisfied, without a well-grounded Persuasion, that we are *reconciled* to this supreme LORD, and the Objects of his unchangeable Goodness! —If there be an abandoned Wretch, whose Apprehensions are so fatally blinded; who is so utterly lost to all Sense of his Duty, and of his Interest; let me bewail his *Misery*, while I abhor his Impiety. Bewail his Misery; though Popularity, with her choicest Laurels, adorn his Brow; though Affluence, with her richest Delicacies, load his Table; tho' half a Nation, or half a World, conspire to call him *happy*.

MAY I, by a believing Application, solace myself in this everlasting Source of Love, perfection, and Joy! Grant me this Request, and I ask no more.—Only, that I may expect, not with a reluctant Anxiety, but with a ready Chearfulness, the Arrival of that important Hour; when this Veil of Flesh shall drop, and the Shadows of Mortality flee away. When I shall no longer complain of *obscure* Knowledge; *languid* Affections; and *imperfect* Fruition

tion—but shall see the uncreated and immortal Majesty. See Him, not in this distant and unaffecting Method; of reasoning from his Works; but with the most clear and direct Intuition of the Mind.—When I shall *love* Him, not with a cold and contracted Spirit; but with the most lively and enlarged Emotions of Gratitude.—When I shall incessantly *enjoy* the Light of his Countenance; and be united, inseparably united to his all-glorious GODHEAD.—Take, ye Ambitious, unenvied and unopposed, take to yourselves the Toys of State. May I be enabled to *rejoice* in this blessed Hope; and to *triumph* in that amiable, that adorable, that delightful Name, the LORD MY GOD! And I shall scarce bestow a Thought, on the splendid Pageantry of the World, unless it be to *despise* its empty Pomp, and to *pity* its deluded Admirers.

ALL these Bodies, though immense in their Size, and almost infinite in their Multitude, are *obedient* to the Divine Command. The God of Wisdom “tellet<sup>h</sup> their Numbers,” and is intimately acquainted with their various Properties. The God of Power “callet<sup>h</sup> them “all by their Names,” and assigns them whatsoever Office He pleases.—He *marshals* all the starry Legions, with infinitely greater Ease, and nicer Order; than the most expert General, arranges his disciplined Troops. He appoints  
their

their *Posts*; he marks their *Route*; he fixes the Time for their *Return*. The *Posts*, which he appoints, they occupy, without fail. In the *Route*, which he settles, they persevere, without the least *Deviation*. And to the *Instant*\*, which, he fixes for their *Return*, they are precisely punctual.—He has given them a *Law*, which through a long Revolution of Ages, shall not be broken; unless his sovereign Will interposes, for its *Repeal*. Then indeed, the Motion of the celestial Orbs is controuled; their Action remains suspended; or their Influence receives a new Direction.—The *Sun*, at his Creation, issued forth with a Command, to travel perpetually through the Heavens. Since which, he has never neglected to perform the great Circuit; rejoicing as a Giant to “run his Race.” But, when it is requisite to accomplish the Purposes of Divine Love, the Orders are countermanded; the flaming Courier remits his Career; *stands still in Gibeon*†; and,

\* “The Planets, and all the innumerable Host of heavenly Bodies, perform their Courses and Revolutions, with so much Certainty and Exactness, as never once to fail; but, for almost 6000 Years, come constantly about to the same Period, in the hundredth Part of a Minute. СТАСН. *Hist. Bible.*”

† This is spoken in Conformity to the Scripture Language, and according to the common Notion. With respect to the Power which effected the Alteration; it is much the same Thing, and alike miraculous; whether the Sun, or the Earth, be supposed to move.



for the Conveniency of the chosen People, holds back the falling Day.—The *Moon* was dispatched with a Charge, never to intermit her revolving Course, till Day and Night come to an End. But when the Children of Providence, are to be favoured with an uncommon Continuance of Light, she halts in her March; makes a solemn Pause, *in the Valley of Ajalon*\*; and delays to bring on her attendant Train of Shadows.—When the Enemies of the Lord are to be discomfited, the Stars are levied into the Service; the Stars are armed, and take the Field; *the Stars, in their Courses, fought against Siserat*†.

So  
\* *Jesh. x. 12, 13.*—The Prophet *Habakkuk*, according to his lofty Maunen, celebrates this Event; and points out, in very poetical Diction, the Design of so surprising a Miracle.—*The Sun and Moon stood still in their Habitation: In the Light*, the long-continued and miraculous Light, thy Arrows, edged with Destruction, walked on their awful Errand; *in the clear Shining* of the Day, protracted for this very Purpose, thy glittering Spear, launched by thy People, but guided by thy Hand, sprung to its Prey. *Hab. iii. 11.*

† *Judg. v. 20.*—The scriptural Phrase *fought against*, will, I hope, be a proper Warrant for every Expression, I have used on this Occasion.—The Passage is generally supposed to signify, that some very dreadful *Meteors* (which the Stars were thought to influence) such as fierce Flashes of *Lightning*; impetuous Showers of *Rain*; and rapid Storms of *Hail*; were employed by the Almighty to terrify, annoy, and overthrow the Enemies of

So dutiful is material Nature! So obsequious, in *all* her *Forms*, to her Creator's Pleasure!—The Bellowing Thunders, listen to his Voice; and the vollied Lightnings, observe the Direction of his Eye. The flying Storm, and imperious Whirlwind, wear his Yoke. The raging Waves revere his Nod: they shake the Earth; they dash the Skies; yet, never offer to pass the Limits, which He has prescribed.—Even the planetary Spheres; though vastly larger, than this Wide-extended Earth; are in his Hand, as *Clay* in the Hands of the Potter. Though, *swifter* than the Northern Blast, they sweep the long Tracts of Æther; yet, are they guided by his Reins, and execute whatever He enjoins.—All those enormous Globes of *central* Fire, which beam through the boundless Azure; in comparison of which, an Army of Planets, were like a Swarm of Summer Insects; those,

even

of *Israel*. If so, there cannot be a more clear and lively Paraphrase on the Text, than those fine Lines of a *Jewish* Writer.—*His severe Wrath shall HE sharpen for a Sword; and the World shall fight with him against the Ungodly. Then shall the right-aiming Thunderbolts go abroad; and from the Clouds, as from a well-drawn Bow, shall they fly to the Mark. And Hail-stones, full of Wrath, shall be cast out of a Stone Bow; and the Water of the Sea shall rage against them; and the Floods (as was the Case of the River Kishon) shall cruelly drown them. Yea, a mighty Wind shall stand up against them; and like a Storm, shall blow them away.* Wisd. v. 20, 21, 22, 23.

even those, are conformable to his Will, as the melting Wax to the impressed Seal. — Since *all*, ALL is obedient, throughout the whole Ascent of Things, shall Man be the *only Rebel* against the Almighty Maker? Shall these unruly *Appetites*, reject his Government, and refuse their Allegiance? Shall these headstrong *Passions*, break loose from Divine Restraint; and run wild, in exorbitant Sallies, after their own Imaginations?

O MY Soul, be stung with Remorse, and overwhelmed with Confusion, at the Thought! Is it not a righteous Thing, that the blessed God should sway the Sceptre, with the most absolute Authority, over all the Creatures, which his Power has formed? Especially over those Creatures; whom his distinguishing Favour, has endued with the noble Principle of Reason, and made capable of a blisful Immortality? Sure, if all the Ranks of inanimate Existence, conform to their Maker's Decree, by the *Necessity* of their Nature, this more excellent Race of Beings, should pay their equal Homage, by the *willing* Compliance of their Affections\*. — Comethen, all ye *Faculties* of my  
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\* This Argument, I acknowledge, is not absolutely conclusive. But it is popular and striking. Nor can I think myself obliged, in such a Work; where *Fancy* bears a considerable Sway; to proceed always with the  
Caution

*Mind*; come, all ye *Powers* of my *Body*; give up yourselves, without a Moment's Delay, without the least Reserve, to his Governance. Stand, like dutiful Servants, at his Footstool; in an everlasting Readiness, to do whatsoever He requires; to be whatsoever He appoints. To further, with united Efforts, the Purposes of his Glory in this earthly Scene; or else to separate, without Reluctance, at his Summons; the one, to sleep in the silent Dust; the other, to advance his Honour, in some remoter Colony of his Kingdom.—Thus, may I join with all the Works of the Lord, in all Places of his Dominion, to recognize his universal Supremacy; and proclaim Him Sovereign of Souls, as well as Ruler of Worlds.

AT Caution and Exactness, of a *Disputer* in the *Schools*. If there be some Appearance of Analogy, between the Fact and the Inference, it seems sufficient for my Purpose; though the Deduction should not be necessary, nor the Process strictly syllogistical.—One of the *Apostolic Fathers*, has an affecting and sublime Paragraph, which runs in this Form: *The Sun, the Moon, and the starry Choir, without the least Deviation, and with the utmost Harmony, perform the Revolutions appointed them by the Supreme Decree.* From which Remark, and abundance of other similar Instances, observable in the Oeconomy of Nature; he exhorts Christians, to a cordial Unanimity among themselves, and a dutiful Obedience to God. Vid. *Clem. Roman. 1 Ep. ad Corinth. Sect. 20.*—See also a beautiful Ode in Dr. *Watts's Lyric Poems*, intitled *The Comparison and Complaint*, which turns upon this very Thought.



AT my first coming abroad, all these Luminaries were *eclipsed*, by the overpowering Lustre of the Sun. They were all placed in the very same Stations; and played the same sprightly Beams; yet, not one of them was seen. As the Daylight wore away, and the sober Shades advanced; *Hesperus*, who leads the starry Train, disclosed his radiant Forehead, and caught my Eye. While I stood gazing on his bright and beautiful Aspect, several of his Attendants peeped through the blue Curtains. Scarce had I turned to observe these fresh Emanations of Splendor; but others dropt the Veil; others stole into View. When lo! faster and more numerous, Multitudes sprung from Obscurity; they poured, in shining Troops, and in sweet Confusion, over all the empyrean Plain. Till the Firmament seemed, like one vast Constellation; and “a Flood of Glory burst from all the Skies.”

Is not such the *Rise*, and such the *Progress* of a true *Conversion*, in the prejudiced Infidel, or inattentive Sinner? During the Period of his vainer Years, a Thousand interesting Truths, lay utterly undiscovered; a Thousand momentous Concerns, were intirely disregarded. But, when divine Grace dissipates the delusive Glitter, which dazled his Understanding, and beguiled his Affections; then, He begins to discern, dimly to discern, the Things which be-

long unto his Peace. Some Admonition of Scripture, darts Conviction into his Soul; as the Glimmering of a Star, pierces the Gloom of Night.—Then, perhaps, another awful, or cheering Text, impresses Terror, or diffuses Comfort. A *Threatening* alarms his Fears, or a *Promise* awakens his Hopes. This, possibly, is succeeded by some *afflictive* Dispensation of Providence; and improved by some edifying and *instructive* Conversation. All which is established, as to its Continuance; and enlarged, as to its Influence; by a diligent Study of the sacred Word.—By this Means, new Truths continually pour their Evidence. Scenes of refined and exalted, but hitherto unknown Delight, address Him with their Attractives. New Desires take Wing; now Pursuits are set on Foot. A new Turn of Mind forms his Temper; a new Habit of Conversation regulates his Life. In a Word; *old Things are passed away; and all Things become new*. He, who was sometime Darkness, is now Light, and Life, and Joy in the LORD.

THE more attentively I view the crystal Concave, the more fully I discern the Richness of its Decorations. Abundance of minuter Lights, which lay concealed from a *superficial* Notice, are visible on a *closer* Examination. Especially in those Tracts of the Sky, which are called the *Galaxy*; and are distinguishable, by

a sort of milky Path. There, the Stars are crowded, rather than disseminated. The Region seems to be all on a Blaze, with their blended Rays.—Besides this vast Profusion, which in my present Situation the Eye discovers; was I to make my Survey, from any other Part of the Globe, lying nearer the Southern Pole; I should behold a *new Choir* of starry Bodies, which have never appeared within our Horizon.—Was I (which is still more wonderful) either Here or There, to view the Firmament with the Virtuoso's Glass; I should find a prodigious Multitude of flaming Orbs, which, immersed in Depths of Æther, escape the keenest unassisted Sight\*—Yet, in these various Situations; even with the Aid of the Telescopic Tube; I should not be able to descry the Half, perhaps not a *Thousandth* Part, of those majestic Luminaries, which the vast expansive Heavens contain\*.—So, the more

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diligent

\* Come forth, O Man, yon azure Round survey,  
And view those Lamps, which yield eternal Day.  
Bring forth thy Glasses: clear thy wond'ring Eyes:  
Millions beyond the former Millions rise:  
Look farther:—Millions more blaze from remoter  
Skies.

See a Poem, intituled *The Universe.*

† How noble, considered in this View, are the Celebrations of the Divine Majesty, which frequently occur in the sacred Writings! *It is the LORD that made the*  
Hea.

diligently I pursue my Search, into those Oracles of eternal Truth, the *Scriptures*; I perceive a wider, a deeper, an ever increasing Fund of spiritual Treasures. I perceive the brighter Strokes of Wisdom, and the richer Displays of Goodness; a more transcendent Excellency in the illustrious Messiah, and a more deplorable Vileness in fallen Man; a more immaculate Purity in God's Law, and more precious Privileges in his Gospel. Yet, after a Course of Study, ever so assiduous; ever so prolonged; I should have Reason to own myself, a mere *Babe* in heavenly Knowledge; or, at most, but a *puerile* Proficient, in the School of CHRIST.

AFTER all my most accurate Inspection, those starry Orbs appear but as *glittering Points*. Even the Planets, though so much nearer our earthly Mansion, seem only like burning *Bullets*. If then, we have such *imperfect Apprehensions* of visible and material Things; how much more scanty and inadequate, must be our Notions

*Heavens*. Ps. xcvi. 5.--What a prodigious Dignity, does such a Sense of Things give to that devout Ascription of Praise! *Thou, even Thou, art LORD alone; Thou hast made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens, with all their Host.* Nehem. ix. 6.—Examined by this Rule, the beautiful Climax in our inspired Hymn, is sublime beyond Compare, *Praise HIM, Sun and Moon! Praise HIM, all ye Stars of Light: Praise HIM, ye Heavens of Heavens.* Psal. cxlviii. 3, 4.



tions of invisible and immortal Objects!—We behold the Stars. Though every one is incomparably bigger than the Globe we inhabit; yet they dwindle, upon our Survey, into the most diminutive Forms. Thus, we see by Faith the Glories of the blessed Jesus; the atoning Efficacy of his Death; the justifying Merit of his Righteousness; and the Joys, which are reserved for his Followers. But Alas! even our most *exalted* Ideas, are vastly *below* the Truth. As much below the Truth; as the Report, which our Eyes make of those celestial Edifices, is inferior to their real Grandeur.—Should we take in all the *magnifying* Assistances, which Art has contrived; those luminous Bodies, would elude our Skill, and appear as *small* as ever. Should an Inhabitant of Earth, travel towards the Cope of Heaven; and be carried forwards, in his aerial Journey, more than a Hundred and sixty Millions of Miles\*; even in that advanced Situation, those *Oceans of Flame*, would look no larger, than *radiant Specks*.—In like manner, conceive ever so magnificently, of the Redeemer's Honours; and

\* This, incredible as it may seem, is not a mere Supposition, but a real Fact. For, about the Twenty-first of December, we are above 160,000,000 of Miles nearer the Northern Parts of the Sky, than we were at the Twenty-first of June. And yet, with regard to the Stars situate in that Quarter, we perceive no *Change* in their *Aspect*, nor any *Augmentation* of their *Magnitude*.

and of the Bliss, which he has purchased for his People; yet you will fall short. Raise your Imagination *higher*; stretch your Invention *wider*; give them *all* the scope, which a soaring and excursive Fancy can take; still, your Conceptions will be extremely *disproportionate*, to their genuine Perfections.—Vast are the Bodies, which roll in the Expanse of Heaven: vaster far are those Fields of Æther, through which they run their endless Round: but the Excellency of JESUS, and the Happiness laid up for his Servants, are greater than *either*; than *both*; than *all*. An inspired Writer calls the former, “The unsearchable Riches of CHRIST;” and files the latter, “An exceeding great and “eternal Weight of Glory.”

If those Stars, are so many inexhaustible Magazines of Fire, and immense *Reservoirs* of Light; there is no Reason to doubt, but they have some very *grand Uses*, suitable to the Magnificence of their Nature. To specify, or explain, the particular Purposes they answer; is altogether impossible, in our present State of Distance and Ignorance. This, however, we may clearly discern; they are disposed in that very Manner, which is most *pleasing* and most *serviceable* to Mankind.—They are not placed at an *infinite Remove*, so as to lie beyond our Sight; neither are they brought *so near* our Abode, as to annoy us with their Beams. We

see

see them shine on every Side. The deep Azure, which serves them as a Ground heightens their Splendor. At the same Time, their Influence is gentle, and their Rays are destitute of Heat. So that we are surrounded with a Multitude of fiery Globes, which beautify and illuminate the Firmament, without any Risque, either to the *Coolness* of our Night, or the *Quiet* of our Repose.—Who can sufficiently admire that wonderful Benignity; which, on our Account, strews the *Earth* with Blessings of every Kind; and vouchsafes to make the *very Heavens*, subservient to our Delight?

It is not solely to adorn the Roof of our Palace, with costly Gildings; that God commands the celestial Luminaries, to glitter through the Gloom. We also reap considerable Benefits, from their Ministry.—They *divide* our *Time*, and fix its solemn Periods. They settle the *Order* of our *Works*; and are, according to the Destination mentioned in sacred Writ, “for Signs, and for Seasons; for Days, and for “Years.” The Returns of Heat and Cold alone, would have been too precarious a Rule. But these radiant Bodies; by the *Variation*, and also by the *Regularity*, of their Motions; afford a Method of calculating, absolutely certain, and sufficiently obvious. By this, the *Farmer* is instructed, when to commit his Grain to the

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Furrows, and how to conduct the Operations of Husbandry! By this, the *Sailor* knows when to proceed on his Voyage, with least Peril; and how to carry on the Business of Navigation, with most Success.

Why should not the Christian, the Probationer for Eternity, learn from the same Monitors, to *number*—for nobler Purposes, to number his *Days*; and duly to transact the grand, grand Affairs of his everlasting Salvation? Since God has appointed so many bright Measurers of our Time, to determine its larger Periods, and to minute down its ordinary Stages; sure, this most strongly inculcates its *Value*, and should powerfully prompt us to *improve* it.—Behold! the supreme Lord marks the Progress of our Life, in that most conspicuous Kalendar above. Does not such an Ordination tell us, and in the most emphatical Language; That our Life is given for *Use*, not for *Waste*? That no Portion of it is delivered, but under a strict Account; that all of it is entered, as it passes, in the Divine Register; and, therefore, that the Stewards of such a Talent, are to expect a future Reckoning? Behold! the very Heavens are bid to be the *Accomptants*, of our Years, and Months, and Days. O! may this induce us to manage them, with a vigilant Frugality; to part with them, as Misers with their *hoarded Treasure*, warily and circumspectly;



ly; and, if possible, as Merchants with their rich *Commodities*, not without an Equivalent, either in personal Improvement, or social Usefulness!

How *bright* the starry Diamonds shine! The Ambition of Eastern Monarchs could imagine no Distinction, more noble and sublime, than that of being likened to those beaming Orbs\*. — They form Night's richest *Dress*; and sparkle upon her sable Robe, like Jewels of the finest Lustre. Like Jewels! I wrong their Character. The lucid Stone has no Brillancy; quenched is the Flame even of the golden Topaz; compared with those glowing Decorations of Heaven. — How widely are their radiant Honours *diffused*! No Nation so remote, but sees their Beauty, and rejoices in their Usefulness. They have been admired by all preceding Generations; and every rising Age, will gaze on their Charms, with renewed Delight. — How *animating*, then, is that Promise, made to the faithful Ministers of the Gospel! “They that turn many to Righteousness, shall shine as the Stars for ever and ever†” Is not this a most winning Encouragement, “to spend and be spent,” in the Service of Souls? Methinks, the Stars beckon, as they twinkle. Methinks, they shew me their Splendors, on purpose to inspire me with *Austerity*, in the Race set before me;

\* Numb. xxiv. 17. Dan. viii. 10. † Dan. xii. 3.

me; on purpose to enliven my *Activity*, in the Work that is given me to do.—Yes; ye majestic Monitors, I understand your Meaning. If Honour has any Charms; if true Glory, the Glory which cometh from God, is any Attractive; you display the most powerful Incitements, to exercise all Affiduity in my holy Vocation. I will, henceforth, observe your Intimation; and, when Zeal becomes *languid*, have recourse to your heavenly Lamps. If so be, I may *rekindle* its Ardor, at those extinguishable Fires.

Of the *Polar Star*, it is observable; that, while other Luminaries *alter* their Situation, this seems invariably *fixed* \*. While other Luminaries, now, mount the Battlements of Heaven, and appear upon Duty; now, retire beneath the Horizon, and resign to a fresh Set, the Watches of the Night; this never departs from its Station. This, in every Season, maintains an uniform Position; and is always to be found, in the same Tract of the Northern Sky.—How often has this beamed bright Intelligence on the *Sailor*; and conducted the Keel, to its desired Haven! In early Ages, those, who

I speak in Conformity to the *Appearance* of the Object. For, though this remarkable Star revolves round the Pole, its *Motion* is so *slow*, and the *Circle* it describes so *small*; as render both the Revolution, and change of Situation, hardly perceivable.

who went down to the Sea in Ships, and occupied their Business in great Waters, had scarce any other sure Guide for their wandering Vessel. This therefore they viewed, with the most solicitous Attention. By this, they formed their Observations, and regulated their Voyage. When this was obscured by Clouds, or enveloped in Mists; the trembling Mariner was *bewildered*, on the watery Waste. His Thoughts fluctuated, as much as the floating Surge; and he knew not, *where* he was advanced, or *whither* he should steer. But, when this auspicious Star broke through the Gloom; it dissipated the Anxiety of his Mind, and cleared up his dubious Passage. He re-assumed, with Alacrity, the Management of the Helm; and was able to shape his Course, with some tolerable Degree of Satisfaction and Certainty.

*SUCH*, only much clearer in its Light, and much surer in its Direction, is the *Holy Word* of God, to those Myriads of intellectual Beings, who are bound for the eternal Shores. Who, embarked in a Vessel of feeble Flesh, are to pass the Waves of this tempestuous and perilous World. In all *Difficulties*, those sacred Pages shed an encouraging Ray; in all *Uncertainties*, they suggest the right Determination, and point out the proper Procedure. What is still a more inestimable Advantage; they, like the Star which conducted the Eastern Sages,

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make plain the Way of Access to a Redeemer. They display his unspeakable Merits; they discover the Method of being interested in his great Atonement; and lead the weary Soul, tossed by Troubles, and shattered by Temptations, to that only Harbour of peaceful Repose.—Let us, therefore, attend to this unerring Directory, with the same Constancy of Regard, as the Sea-faring Man observes his Compass. Let us become as thoroughly acquainted with this sacred Chart, as the Pilot is with every trusty Mark, that gives Notice of a lurking Rock; and with every open Road, that yields a safe Passage into the Port. Above all, let us commit ourselves to this infallible Guidance, with the same implicit Resignation; let us conform our Conduct to its exalted Precepts, with the same sedulous Care; as the Children of Israel, when sojourning in the trackless Desert, followed the Pillar of Fire, and the Motions of the miraculous Cloud.—So, will it introduce us, not into an earthly Canaan, flowing with Milk and Honey; but into an immortal Paradise, where is the Fulness of Joy, and where are Pleasures for evermore. It will introduce us into those happy, happy Regions, where our Sun shall no more go down, nor our Moon withdraw itself; for the LORD shall be our everlasting Light, and the Days of our Mourning,



Mourning, together with the Fatigues of our Pilgrimage, *shall be ended*.\*

I PERCEIVE a great Variety, in the Size and Splendor of those Gems of Heaven. Some, are of the first Magnitude; others of an inferior Order. Some glow, with intense Flames; others glimmer, with fainter Beams. Yet, all are beautiful; all have their peculiar Lustre, and distinct Use; all tend, in their different Degrees, to enamel the Cope of Heaven, and embroider the Robe of Night. — This Circumstance is remarked by an Author, whose Sentiments are a Source of Wisdom, and the very Standard of Truth. “One Star, says the Apostle of the *Gentiles*, differeth from another Star in Glory: “So, also, is the Resurrection of the Dead.”

IN the World above, are various Degrees of Happiness, various Seats of Honour. Some will rise to more illustrious Distinctions, and richer Joys†. Some, like Vessels of ample Capacity, will admit more copious Accessions of Light and Excellence. Yet, there will be no Want, no Deficiency, in any; but a Fulness both of Divine Satisfaction, and personal Perfections. *Each* will enjoy *all* the Good; and

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\* Isa. lx. 20.

† 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. The great Mr. Mede prefers the Sense here given; and the learned Dr. Hammond admits it, into his Paraphrase. Whose joint Authority, though far from excluding any other, yet is a sufficient Warrant for this Application of the Words.

be adorned with *all* the Glory; that his Heart can wish, or his Condition receive.—None will know what it is to envy. Not the least Malevolence, nor the least Selfishness, but everlasting Friendship prevails, and a mutual Complacency in each other's Delight. Love, cordial Love, will give every particular Saint, a Participation of all the Fruitions\*; which are diffusive through the whole Assembly of the Blessed.—No one *eclipses*, but each *reflects Light* upon his Brother. A sweet Interchange of Rays subsists; all enlightened by the great Fountain, and all enlightening one another. By which reciprocal Communication of Pleasure and Amity, each will be continually *receiving from, each incessantly adding to*, the general Felicity.

HAPPY, supremely happy they, who are admitted into the celestial Mansions. Better to be a Door-keeper in those “Ivory Palaces†,” than to fill the most gorgeous Throne on Earth. The very lowest Place at God's Right-hand, is distinguished Honour, and consummate Bliss.—O! that we may, in some measure, anticipate that beatific State, while we remain in our Banishment below! May we, *by rejoicing in the superior Prosperity of another, make it*

\* *Tolle Invidiam, et tuum est quod habeo: Tolle Invidiam, et meum est quod habes.* AUGUSTINE.

† Psal. xlv. 8.

our own! And, provided the general Result is Harmony, be content, be pleased, with whatsoever Part is assigned to our Share, in the universal Choir of Affairs.

WHILE I am considering the heavenly Bodies, I must not intirely forget those fundamental Laws of our modern Astronomy, *Projection* and *Attraction*. One of which is the all-combining Cement, the other is the ever-operative Spring, of the mighty Frame.—In the Beginning, the all-creating FIAT impressed a proper Degree of Motion, on each of those whirling Orbs. Which, if not controuled, would have carried them on, in strait Lines, and to endless Lengths; till they were even lost, in the Abyss of Space. But, the *gravitating* Property, being added to the *projectile* Force determined their Courses to a *circular* \* Form; and obliged the reluctant Rovers, to perform their destined Rounds.—Where either of those Causes to suspend their Action, all the harmoniously

U 3

moving

\* I am aware the planetary Orbits are not strictly circular, but rather *elliptical*. However, as they are but a small Remove from the perfectly round Figure; and partake of it incomparably more, than the Trajectories of the Comets; I choose to represent the Thing in this View. Especially, because the Notion of a Circle, is so much more intelligible to the Generality of Readers, than that of an Ellipsis; and because I laid it down for a Rule, not to admit any such *abstruse* Sentiment, or *dis-*  
ficult,



moving Spheres would be disconcerted. Would degenerate into sluggish inactive Masses; and falling into the central Fire, be burnt to Ashes. Or else, would exorbitate into wild Confusion; and each, by the Rapidity of its Whirl, be dissipated into Atoms. But, the impulsive and attractive Energy, being most nicely attuned to each other; and, under the immediate Operation of the Almighty, exerting themselves in perpetual Concert; the various Globes run their radiant Races, without the least Interruption or the least Deviation. So as to create the alternate Changes of *Day and Night*; and distribute the useful Vicissitudes of *succeeding Seasons*. So as to answer all the great ends of a gracious Providence; and procure every comfortable Convenience, for universal Nature.

Does not this Constitution of the material, very naturally lead the Thoughts, to those grand Principles of the moral and devotional World, *Faith and Love*?—These are often celebrated by the inspired Apostle, as a comprehensive Summary

*facult* Expression, as should demand a painful Attention, instead of raising an agreeable Idea. For which Reason, I have avoided *technical* Terms; have taken no Notice of *Jupiter's Satellites*, or *Saturn's Ring*: have not so much as mentioned the Names of the Planets, nor attempted to wade into any Depths of the Science, Left to those who have no Opportunity of using the Telescope, or of acquainting themselves with a System of Astronomy, I should propound Riddles, rather than display *enter-aining and edifying* Truths.



mary of the Gospel\*. These inspire the Breast, and regulate the Progress of each private Christian. These unite the whole Congregation of the Faithful to God, and one another To God, the great Centre, in the Bonds of Gratitude and Devotion; to one another, by reciprocal Intercourse of brotherly Affections, and friendly Offices.—If you ask, Why is it impossible for the true Believer, to live at all Adventures? to *stagnate* in Sloth, or habitually to *deviate* from Duty?—We answer, It is owing to “his Faith, working by Love†.” He assuredly trusts, that CHRIST has sustained the Infamy, and endured the Torment, due to his Sins. He firmly relies on that Divine Propitiation, for the Pardon of all his Guilt; and humbly expects everlasting Salvation, as the Purchase of his Saviour’s Merits. This produces such a Spirit of Gratitude, as refines his Inclinations, and animates his whole Behaviour. He cannot, he cannot run to Excess of Riot; because Love to his adorable Redeemer, like a strong, but filken *Curb*, sweetly restrains him. He cannot, he cannot lie lulled in a lethargic Indolence; because Love to the same infinite Benefactor, like a pungent, but endearing *Spur*, pleasingly excites him.—In a Word; Faith supplies the powerful Impulse, while Love gives the determining Bias; and leads the

\* Col. i. 4. Philen, ver. 5.

† Gal. v. 6.

the willing Feet, through the whole Circle of God's Commandments. By the united Efficacy of these *heavenly Graces*, the Christian Conduct is preserved, in the Uniformity and Beauty of Holiness; as by the blended Power of those *Newtonian Principles*, the solar System revolves, in a steady and magnificent Regularity.

How admirable, how extensive, how diversified, is the Force of this single Principle, *Attraction* \* !—This penetrates the very Essence of all Bodies, and diffuses itself to the remotest Limits of the mundane System.—By this, the Worlds impressed with Motion, hang *self-balanced* on their Centres †; and, though Orbs of immense Magnitude, require nothing, but this amazing Property, for their Support.—To this we ascribe a Phenomenon, of a very different Kind, the *Pressure* of the Atmosphere. Which, though a yielding and expansive Fluid; yet constricted by an attractive Energy; surrounds the whole Globe, and incloses every Creature, as it were with a tight Bandage. An Expedient this, absolutely necessary to preserve the Texture of our Bodies; and indeed, to maintain every Species of Animal Existence.—Attraction ! Urged by this wonderful Impetus, the *Rivers* circulate, copious and unintermitted,

among  
\* I mean the Attraction both of *Gravitation* and *Cohesion*.

† *Ponderibus librata suis.*

among all the Nations of the Earth: sweeping with Rapidity down the Steeps, or softly ebbing thro' the Plains. Impelled by the same mysterious Force, the *nutritious Juices* are detached from the Soil: and, ascending the Trees, find their Way through Millions of the finest Meanders, in order to transfuse vegetative Life into all the Branches. — This confines the *Ocean*, within proper Bounds. Though the Waves thereof roar; though they toss themselves, with all the Madness of indignant Rage: yet, checked by this potent, this inevitable Curb, they are unable to pass even the slight Barrier of Sand. To this the *Mountains* owe that unshaken Firmness, which laughs at the Shock of careering Winds; and bids the Tempest, with all its mingled Horrors, impotently rave. — By virtue of this invisible Mechanism; without the Aid of Crane or Pully, or any Instrument of human Device; many Thousand Tons of Water are *raised*, every Moment, into the Regions of the Firmament. By this, they continue *suspended* in thin Air, without any capacious Cistern, to contain their Substance; or any massy Pillars, to sustain their Weight. By this same variously acting Power, they return to the Place of their native Residence; *distilled* in gentle Falls of Dew, or *precipitated* in impetuous Showers of Rain. They *slide* into the Fields in fleecy Flights of Snow, or are *darted* upon the



the Houses in clattering Storms of Hail.— This occasions the strong *Cohesion* of solid Bodies. Without which, our large Machines could exert themselves with no Vigour; and the nicer Utensils of Life, would elude our Expectations of Service. This affords a Foundation, for all those delicate or noble mechanic Arts; which furnish Mankind with numberless Conveniencies, both of Ornament and Delight.—In short; this is the prodigious *Ballast*, which composes the *Equilibrium*, and constitutes the *Stability* of Things: this, the great *Chain*, which forms the *Connexions* of universal Nature; and the mighty *Engine*, which prompts, facilitates, and, in good measure, accomplishes all her Operations.—What *complicated* Effects, from a *single* Cause\*! What *Profusion*, amidst *Frugality*! An unknown *Profusion* of Benefits, with the utmost *Frugality* of Expence!

AND what is this Attraction? Is it a Quality, in its Existence, inseparable from Matter; and, in its Acting, independent on the DEITY! —Quite the reverse. It is the very *Finger* of God: the constant Impression of Divine Power: a Principle, neither innate in Matter, nor intelligible by Mortals.—Does it not, however,

bear

\* See another remarkable Instance of this Kind, in the *Reflections on a Flower-Garden*, pag. 166.—together with a fine Observation, quoted in the corresponding Note.



bear a considerable Analogy to the Agency of the HOLY GHOST, in the Christian Economy? Are not the gracious Operations of the Blessed Spirit, thus *extensive*, thus *admirable*, thus *various*?—That Almighty Being transmits his Gifts, through every Age; and communicates his Graces, to every Adherent on the Redeemer. All, either of illustrious Memory, or of beneficial Tendency; in a Word, “all the Good that is done upon Earth, He doth it himself.” Strong in *his* Aid, and in the Power of *his* Might, the Saints of all Times, have trod Vice under their Feet; have triumphed over this abject World; and conversed in Heaven, while they dwelt on Earth. *Not I, but the Grace of GOD which was with me\**, is the unanimous Acknowledgment of them All.—By the same kindly Succours, the whole Church is still enlightened, quickened, and governed. Through his benign Influences, the Scales of *Ignorance*, fall from the Understanding; the Leprosy of *evil* Concupiscence, is purged from the Will; and the Fetters, the more than adamantine Fetters of *habitual* Iniquity, drop off from the Conversation. He breathes even upon dry Bones†, and they live: they are animated with Faith; they pant with  
ardent

\* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

† See that beautiful Piece of sacred and allegorical Imagery displayed, *Ezek. xxxvii.*

ardent and heavenly Desires; they exercise themselves in all the Duties of Godliness.—His real, though secret, Inspiration, dissolves the Flint in the impenitent Breast; and binds up the Sorrows, of the broken Heart. Raises the Thoughts high, in the Elevations of holy Hope; yet lays them low, in the Humiliations of inward Abasement. *Steels* the Soul with impenetrable Resolution, and persevering Fortitude; at the same time, *softens* it into a Dove-like Meekness, and *melts* it in penitential Sorrow.

WHEN I contemplate those ample and magnificent Structures, erected over all the æthereal Plains:—When I look upon them as so many splendid Repositories of Light, or fruitful Abodes of Life:—When I remember, that there may be other Orbs, vastly more remote, than those which appear to our unaided Sight; Orbs, whose Effulgence, though travelling ever since the Creation, is not yet arrived upon our Coasts \*:—When I stretch my Thoughts to the innumerable Orders of Being, which

\* If this Conjecture (which has no less a Person than the celebrated Mr. *Huygens* for its Author) concerning *unseen Stars*, be true—If, to this Observation, be added, what is affirmed by our skilful Astronomers; that the Motion of the Rays of Light is so *surprisingly swift*, as to pass through ten Millions of Miles in a single Minute—How vast! beyond Imagination vast and unmeasurable, are the Spaces of the Universe!—While the Mind is distend-

inhabit all those spacious Systems; from the loftiest Seraph, to the lowest Reptile; from the Armies of Angels, which surround the Throne of JEHOVAH; to the puny Nations, which tinge with Blue the Surface of the Plum\* or mantle the standing Pool with Green:—How various appear the Links, in this immense Chain! How vast the Gradations, in this universal Scale of Existence! yet all these, though ever so vast and various, are the Work of God's Hand, and are full of his Presence.

He rounded in his Palm those dreadfully large Globes, which are pendulous in the Vault

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ed with the grand Idea; or rather, while she is dispatching her ablest Powers of piercing Judgment, and excursive Fancy; and finds them all drop short; all baffled by the amazing Subject: Permit me to apply that spirited Exclamation, and noble Remark—

— Say, proud Arch,  
Built with divine Ambition; in Disdain  
Of Limit built; built in the Taste of Heaven!  
Vast Concave! Ample Dome! Wast thou design'd  
A meet Apartment for the DEITY?  
Not so: That thought alone thy State impairs:  
Thy *Lofty* sinks; and shallows thy *Profound*;  
And strengthens thy *Diffusive*.—

Night-Thoughts, No. IX.

\* Ev'n the blue Down the purple Plum surrounds,  
A living World, thy failing Sight confounds.  
To *Heaven* a peopled Habitation shews,  
Where Millions taste the Bounty God bestows.

See a beautiful and instructive Poem, filed—DEITY.

of Heaven. He kindled those astonishingly bright Fires, which fill the Firmament with a Flood of Glory. By Him they are suspended in *fluid* Æther, and cannot be shaken: By Him they dispense a *perpetual* Tide of Beams, and are never exhausted.—He formed, with inexpressible Nicety, that delicately fine Collection of Tubes; that unknown Multiplicity of subtile Springs; which organize, and actuate, the Frame of the minutest Insect. He bids the crimson Current roll; the vital Movements play; and associates a World of Wonders, even in an *animated Point* \*.—In all these, is

\* There are living Creatures abundantly smaller than the Mite. Mr. *Bradley*, in his Treatise on Gardening, mentions an Insect, which, after accurate Examination, he found to be a Thousand times *less* than the *least* visible Grain of Sand. Yet such an Insect, though quite imperceptible to the naked Eye, is an Elephant, is a Whale, compared with other Animalcules almost infinitely more minute, discovered by Mr. *Lewenhoeck*.—If we consider the several Limbs, which compose such an organized Particle: The different Muscles, which actuate such a Set of Limbs: The Flow of Spirits, incomparably more attenuated, which put those Muscles in Motion: The various Fluids, which circulate: The different Secretions, which are performed: Together with the peculiar Minuteness of the Solids, before they arrive at their full Growth: Not to mention other *more astonishing* Modes of Diminution:—Sure, we shall have the utmost Reason to acknowledge, that the adored Maker is—**MAXIMUS IN MINIMIS**; *greatly glorious* even in his *smallest* Works.



a signal Exhibition of creating Power; to all these, are extended, the special Regards of preserving Goodness. From hence, let me learn to rely on the Providence, and to revere the Presence, of the Supreme Majesty.

To rely on his *Providence*.—For, amidst that inconceivable Number and Variety of Beings, which swarm through the Regions of Creation, not one is overlooked, not one is neglected, by the great omnipotent Cause of all. However inconsiderable in its Character, or diminutive in its Size, it is still the production of the universal Maker, and belongs to the Family of the Almighty Father.—What? though enthroned Archangels, enjoy the *Smiles* of his *Countenance*! Yet, the low Inhabitants of Earth, the most despicable Worms of the Ground, are not excluded from his *providential Care*. Though the Manifestation of his Perfections, is vouchsafed to holy and intellectual Effences; his Ear is open, to the Cries of the young Raven. His Eye is attentive, to the Wants, and to the Welfare, of the very meanest Births of Nature.—How much less then, are his own People disregarded? Those, for whom He has delivered his beloved Son to Death, and for whom He has prepared Habitations of eternal Joy. *They* disregarded! No. *THEY* are “kept as the Apple of an Eye.” The very Hairs of their Head are all numbered. The  
X 2 fondest

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fondest Mother may *forget* the Infant, that is  
 “dandled upon her Knees,” and sucks at her  
 Breast\*; much sooner than the Father of ever-  
 lasting

\* *Isa. xlix. 15. Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee.*—How delicate and expressive are the Images, in this charming Scripture! How full of *Beauty*, if beheld in a critical, how rich with *Consolation*, if considered in a believing, View!—Can a *Woman*? One of the softer Sex; whose Nature is most impressible, and whose Passions are remarkably tender—Can such a one, not barely disregard, but intirely *forget*; not suspend her Care for a while, but entirely erase the very Memory—Of her *Child*; her own Child, not another's; a Child, that was formed in her *Womb*, and is a Part of herself? Her *Son*, the more important, and therefore more desirable Species; to whom it peculiarly belongs, to preserve the Name, and build up the Family—Her *only* Son; for the Word is singular; and refers to a Case, where the Offspring, not being numerous, but centred in a single Birth, must be productive of the fondest Endearment—Can she divest herself of all Concern for such a Child; not when he is grown up to Maturity, or gone abroad from her House; but, while he continues in an infantile State, and must owe his whole Safety to her kind Attendance; while he lies in her Bosom, rests on her Arm, and even *sucks* at her Breast?—Especially, if the poor Innocent be racked with Pain, or seized by some severe Affliction; and so become an Object of *Compassion*, as well as of Love. Can she hear its piercing Cries; can she see it all restless, all helpless under its Misery; and feel no Emotions of parental Pity?—If *one* such Monster of Inhumanity might be found; could *all* Mothers  
 be

lasting Compassions can *discontinue*, or *remit*, his watchful Tenderness to his People—his Children—his Heirs.

LET this teach me a more lively Sense of the *Divine Presence*.—All the rolling Worlds above; all the living Atoms below; together with all the Beings that intervene, betwixt these wide Extremes; are Vouchers for an ever-present Deity. “God has not left Himself “without Witnesses.” The Marks of his Footsteps are evident in every Place, and the Touches of his Finger distinguishable in every Creature. “*Thy Name is so high*, O Thou all-“supporting, all-informing LORD; and that “*do thy wonderful Works declare*.” Thy “Goodness warms in the Morning Sun, and “refreshes in the Evening Breeze. Thy Glory “shines in the Lamps of Midnight, and smiles “in the Blossoms of Spring. We see a *Trace* “of thy incomprehensible Grandeur, in the “*boundless* Extent of Things; and a *Sketch* “of thy exquisite Skill, in those almost *evanescent* “Sparks of Life, the Insect Race.”—How

X 3

stupid is this Heart of mine, that, amidst such  
be so degenerate? This, sure, cannot be suspected, need not be feared. Much less need the true Believer be apprehensive of the Failure of my Kindness. An *universal* Extinction of those *strongest* Affections of Nature, is a more supposable Case; than that I should ever be unmindful of my People, or regardless of their Interests.

\* Psal. lxxv. 2.

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a Multitude of Remembrancers, thronging on every Side, I should forget Thee a single Moment! Grant me, Thou great I AM; Thou Source, and Support, of universal Existence—O! grant me an enlightened Eye, to discern Thee in every Object; and a devout Heart, to adore Thee on every Occasion. Instead of living without God in the World; May I be ever with Him, and see all Things full of Him!

—The glittering Stars,  
By the deep Ear of Meditation heard,  
Still in their Midnight Watches sing of HIM.  
He nods a Calm. The Tempest blows his Wrath.  
The Thunder is his Voice; and the red Flash  
His speedy Sword of Justice. At his Touch  
The Mountains flame. He shakes the solid Earth,  
And rocks the Nations. Nor in these alone,  
In ev'ry Common Instance GOD is seen.

THOMSON'S Spring.  
IF the beautiful Spangles, which a clear Night  
pours on the Beholder's Eye; if those other  
Fires, which beam in remoter Skies; and are  
discoverable only by, that Revelation to the  
Sight, the Telescope: if all those bright Mil-  
lions, are so many Fountains of Day; enriched  
with native and independent Lustre; illumina-  
ting Planets, and enlivening Systems of their  
own\*: O! what majestic and splendid Pomp is

dis-  
\* Consult with Reason, Reason will reply,  
Each lucid Point, which glows in yonder Sky,  
Informs



disclosed in the Midnight Scene! What *Riches* are disseminated, through all those numberless Provinces of the great *JEHOVAH'S* Empire!—Grandeur beyond Expression!—Yet, there is not the meanest Slave, but carries *greater* Wealth in his own Bosom, possesses *superior*, Dignity in his own Person. The *Soul*, that informs his Clay;—the *Soul*, that teaches him to think, and enables him to choose; that qualifies him to relish rational Pleasure, and to breathe sublime Desire\*;—the *Soul*, that is endowed with such noble Faculties; and, above all, is distinguished with the *dreadful*, the *glorious* Capacity, of Being pained, or blessed, for ever—this Soul surpasses in Worth, whatever the Eye can see; whatever, of material, the Fancy can imagine. Before one such intellectual Being, all the Treasure, and all the Magnificence of unintelligent Creation, becomes poor and contemptible†. For this Soul, Omnipotence

Informs a *System* in the boundless Space,  
And fills, with Glory, its appointed Place:  
With Beams unborrow'd, brightens other Skies;  
And Worlds, to Thee unknown, with Heat and  
Life supplies. *The Universe.*

\* In *this* respect, as vested with such Capacities, the Soul even of fallen Men, has an unquestionable Greatness and Dignity; *is majestic, tho' in Ruin.*

† I beg Leave to transcribe a pertinent Passage, from that celebrated Master of Reason, and universal Literature, Dr. *Bentley*; whom no one can be tempted to suspect,

nipotence itself has waked, and worked, through every Age. To *convince* this Soul, the fundamental Laws of Nature have been controuled; and the most amazing Miracles, have alarmed all the Ends of the Earth. To *instruct* this Soul, the Wisdom of Heaven has been transfused into the sacred Page; and Missionaries have been sent from the Great King, who resides in Light unapproachable. To *sanctify* this Soul, the Almighty Comforter takes the Wings of a Dove; and, with a sweet transforming Influence, broods on the human Heart. And O! to *redeem* this Soul from Guilt; to rescue it from Hell; the Heaven of Heavens was bowed, and God himself came down to dwell in Dust.

LET me pause, a while, upon this important Subject.—What are the Schemes, which engage the Attention of eminent Statesmen, and mighty Monarchs, compared with the grand Interests of an immortal Soul? The Support of Commerce, and the Success of Armies, though extremely

pect, either tinged with Enthusiasm, or warped to Bigotry.—“If we consider, says he, the Dignity of an intelligent Being, and put that in the Scale against brute and inanimate Matter, we may affirm, without overvaluing human Nature, that the Soul of one virtuous and religious Man is of greater Worth and Excellency, than the Sun, and his Planets, and all the Stars in the World.”

See his Sermons at Boyle's Lect. No. 8.

extremely weighty Affairs; yet, if laid in the Balance against the Salvation of a Soul, are lighter than the downy Feather, poised against Talents of Gold. To save a Navy from *Shipwreck*, or a Kingdom from *Slavery*, are Deliverances of the most momentous Nature, which the Transactions of Morality can admit. But O! how they shrink into an inconsiderable Trifle, if (their Aspect upon Immortality forgot) they are set in Competition with the Delivery of a single Soul, from the Anguish and Horrors of a *distressed Eternity*\*

Is such the Importance of the Soul! What Vigilance then can be *too much*; or rather what holy Solitude can be *sufficient*; for the Overseers of the Saviour's Flock, and the Guardians of this great, this venerable, this invaluable Charge?—Since, such is the Importance of the Soul; wilt thou not, O Man, be watchful for the Preservation of thy own! Shall every casual Incident, awaken thy Concern; every transitory Toy, command thy Regard? And shall the Welfare of thy Soul, a Work of continual Occurrence; a Work of endless Consequence; sue, in vain, for thy serious Care?—Thy Soul, thy Soul, is thy All. If this be *secured*,

\* Not all yon Luminaries quench'd at once  
Were half so sad, as one benighted Mind,  
Which gropes for Happiness, and meets Despair.  
*Night Thoughts*, No. IX.

*secured*, thou art greatly rich, and wilt be unspeakably happy. If this be *lost*, a whole World acquired, will leave thee in Poverty; and all its Delights enjoyed, will abandon thee to Misery.

I HAVE often been charmed, and awed at the Sight of the nocturnal Heavens; even before I knew how to consider them, in their proper Circumstances of Majesty and Beauty. *Something*, like *Magic*, has struck my Mind, on a transient and unthinking Survey of the æthereal Vault; tinged throughout with the purest Azure, and decorated with innumerable starry Lamps. I have felt, I know not what, Powerful and aggrandizing Impulse; which seemed to snatch me from the low Intanglements of Vanity, and prompted an ardent Sigh for *sublimar Objects*. Methought, I heard, even from the silent Spheres, a commanding Call, to spurn the abject Earth, and pant after unseen Delights.—Henceforward, I hope to imbibe more copiously, this *moral Emanation* of the Skies; when, in some such Manner as the preceding, they are rationally seen, and the Sight is duly improved. The Stars, I trust, will *teach* as well as *shine*; and help to dispel, both Nature's Gloom, and my intellectual Darkness. To some People, they discharge no better a Service, than that of holding a Flambeau to their Feet, and softening the Horrors of  
their



their Night. To me and my Friends, may they act as Ministers of a superior Order; as Counsellors of Wisdom, and Guides to Happiness! Nor will they fail to execute this nobler Office, if they gently light our Way, into the Knowledge of their adored Maker; if they point out, with their silver Rays, our Path to his beatific Presence.

I GAZE, I ponder. I ponder, I gaze; and think ineffable Things.—I roll an Eye of Awe and Admiration. Again and again I repeat my ravished Views; and can never satiate either my Curiosity, or my Inquiry. I spring my Thoughts into this immense Field, till every Fancy tires upon her Wing. I find Wonders, *ever new*; Wonders, *more and more amazing*.—Yet, after all my present Inquiries, what a mere *Nothing* do I know; by all my future Searches, how *little* shall I be able to learn; of those vastly distant Suns, and their circling Retinue of Worlds! Could I pry with *Newton's* piercing Sagacity, or launch into his extensive Surveys: even then, my Apprehensions would be little better, than those dim and scanty Images, which the *Mole*, just emerged from her Cavern, receives on her feeble Optic.—This, sure, should repress all impatient or immoderate Ardor to pry into the Secrets of the starry Structures; and make me more particularly careful, to cultivate my Heart. To fathom the  
Depths

Depths of the Divine Essence; or to scan universal Nature, with a critical Exactness; is an Attempt, which sets the *acuteſt Philoſopher*, very nearly on a Level with *the Idiot*. Since it is almost, if not altogether, as impracticable by the former, as by the latter.

Be it, then, my chief Study, not to pursue, what is absolutely unattainable; but rather to seek, what is obvious to find; easy to be acquired; and of inestimable Advantage, when possessed. O! let me seek *that Charity*, which edifieth\*; *that Faith*, which purifieth. Love, humble Love, not conceited Science, keeps the Door of Heaven. Faith, a child-like Faith in Jesus; not the haughty self-sufficient Spirit, which scorns to be ignorant of any Thing; presents

\* 1 Cor. viii. 1. I need not inform my Reader, that in this Text; in that admirable Chapter, 1 Cor. xiii. and in various other Passages of Scripture; the Word *Charity*, should by no means be confined to the peculiar Act of *Alms giving*, or external Benificence. It is of a much more exalted and extensive Nature. It signifies that divinely precious Grace, which warms the Soul with *supreme Love* to GOD, and enlarges it with *disinterested Affection* for Men. Which renders it the reigning Care of the Life, and chief Delight of the Heart, to promote the Happiness of the One, and the Glory of the Other. —*This, this*, is that Charity of which so many excellent Things are every where spoken. Which can never be too highly extolled, or too earnestly coveted, since it is the Image of GOD, and the very Spirit of Heaven.

presents a Key\* to those Abodes of Bliss.— This present State, is the Scene destined to the *Exercise of Devotion*; the invisible World, is the Place appointed for the *Enjoyment*, of *Knowledge*. There, the Dawn of our infantile Minds, will be advanced to the Maturity of perfect Day; or rather, there our midnight Shades, will be brightened into all the Lustre of Noon. There, the Souls, which come from the School of Faith and bring with them the Principles of Love, will dwell in Light itself; will be obscured with no Darkness at all; will know, even as they are known†.—Such an Acquaintance, therefore, do I desire to form, and to carry on such a Correspondence, with the heavenly Bodies; as may shed a benign Influence on the Seeds of Grace, implanted in my Breast. Let the exalted Tracts of the Firmament, sink my Soul into *deep Humiliation*. Let those eternal Fires, kindle in my Heart an *adoring Gratitude*, to their Almighty Sovereign. Let yonder ponderous and enormous Globes, which rest on his supporting Arm; teach me an *unshaken Affiance*, in their incarnate Maker.

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Y

Then

\* The Righteousness of CHRIST. This is what MILTON beautifully styles;

— The golden Key,  
That opens the Palace of Eternity.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

Then shall I be—if not wise as the Astronomical Adept, yet WISE UNTO SALVATION.

HAVING now walked and worshipped, in this *universal Temple*, that is arched with Skies; emblazed with Stars; and extended even to Immensity—Having cast an Eye, like the enraptured Patriarch\*; an Eye of *Reason* and *Devotion*, through the magnificent Scene. With the former, having discovered an Infinity of Worlds; and with the latter, having met the Deity in every View—Having beheld, as *Moses*, in the flaming Bush, a *Glimpse* of JEHOVAH'S Excellencies! reflected from the several Planets, and streaming from Myriads of celestial Luminaries—Having read various Lessons, in that stupendous *Book of Wisdom*†, where unmeasurable Sheets of Azure compose the Page; and Orbs of Radiance write, in everlasting Characters, a *Comment*, on our Creed—What remains, but that I close the midnight Solemnity, as our LORD concluded his grand Sacramental Institution with a *Song of Praise*?—And behold a Hymn, suited to the sublime Occasion; indited by ‡ Inspiration itself; transferred

\* Gen. xv. 5.

† — — For Heaven

Is as the *Book of God* before thee set,  
Wherein to read his wondrous Works. — MILT.

‡ Psal. xix.



ferred into our Language, by \* one of the happiest Efforts of human Ingenuity.

*The spacious Firmament on high,  
With all the blue æthereal Sky,  
And spangled Heav'ns, a shining Frame,  
Their great Original proclaim:  
Th' unwearied Sun from Day to Day,  
Does his Creator's Pow'r display;  
And publishes, to ev'ry Land,  
The Works of an Almighty Hand.*

*Soon as the Evening Shades prevail,  
The Moon takes up the wondrous Tale;  
And, nightly, to the listning Earth,  
Repeats the Story of her Birth:  
While all the Stars, that round her burn,  
And all the Planets in their Turn,  
Confirm the Tidings as they roll,  
And spread the Truth from Pole to Pole.*

*What though, in solemn Silence, all  
Move round the dark terrestrial Ball?  
What though, nor real Voice nor Sound  
Amid their radiant Orbs be found?  
In Reason's Ear they all rejoice,  
And utter forth a glorious Voice,  
For ever singing, as they shine,  
The Hand that made Us, is divine.*

Y 2

\* ADDISON, *Spect.* Vol. VI. No. 465.



A

W I N T E R - P I E C E .

~~~~~  
*Storms and Tempests may calm the Soul*  
*—Snow and Ice be taught to warm the*  
*Heart, and praise the Creator.*

Anonym. Lett. to the Author.  
~~~~~







A

## W I N T E R - P I E C E .

**T**IS true, in the delightful Seasons, HIS  
Tenderness and HIS Love, are most  
eminently displayed.—In the *vernal* Months,  
all is Beauty to the Eye, and Music to the Ear.  
The Clouds drop Fatness; the Air softens into  
Balm; and Flowers, in rich Abundance, spring  
where-ever we tread, bloom where-ever we  
look.—Amidst the Burning Heats of *Summer*,  
HE expands the Leaves, and thickens the  
Shades. He spreads the cooling Arbor, to  
receive Us; and awakes the gentle Breeze, to  
fan Us. The Moss swells into a Couch, for the  
Repose of our Bodies; while the Rivulet softly  
rolls, and sweetly murmurs, to sooth our Ima-  
gination.—In *Autumn*, HIS Bounty covers  
the Fields, with a Profusion of nutrimental  
Treasure; and bends the Boughs, with Loads  
of delicious Fruit. He furnishes his hospitable  
Board with present Plenty, and prepares a  
copious Magazine for future Wants.—But, is  
it

it *only* in these smiling Periods of the Year, that God, the all-gracious God, is seen? Has *Winter*, stern Winter, no tokens of his Presence? Yes: All Things are eloquent of his Praise. "His Way is in the Whirlwind." Storms and Tempests fulfil his Word, and extol his Power. Even piercing Frosts, bear Witnesses to his Goodness; while they bid the shivering Nations, tremble at his Wrath.—Be Winter then, for a while, our Theme\*. Perhaps, those *barren* Scenes, may be *fruitful* of intellectual Improvement. Perhaps, that rigorous Cold, which binds the Earth in icy Chains; may serve to enlarge our Hearts, and warm them with holy Love.

SEE! how the *Day* is *shortened*.—The Sun, detained in fairer Climes, or engaged in more agreeable Services, rises, like an unwilling Visitant, with tardy and reluctant Steps. He walks,

\* A Sketch of this Nature, I must acknowledge, is quite different from the Subject of the Book; and, I cannot but declare, was as far distant from the Thoughts of the Author. But, the Desire of *several* Acquaintance, together with an Intimation of its Usefulness, by a very *polite Letter* from an *unknown Hand* (which has *undesignedly* furnished me with the best Motto, I could recollect), prevailed with me to add a few descriptive Touches, and improving Hints, on what is so often experienced in these Northern Regions. I hope, the Attempt I have made to oblige these Gentlemen, will obtain the *Approbation*, or at least, the *Excuse*, of my other Readers.

walks, with a shy Indifference, along the Edges of the Southern Sky; casting an oblique Glance, he just looks upon our dejected World; and scarcely scatters Light, through the thick Air. Dim is his Appearance, languid are his Gleams, while he continues. Or, if He chance to wear a brighter Aspect, and a cloudless Brow; yet, like the Young and Gay in the House of Mourning, He seems uneasy, till He is gone; is in Haste to depart.—And let Him depart. Why should we wish for his longer Stay; since He can shew us nothing, but the Creation in Distress? The flowery Families lie dead, and the tuneful Tribes are struck dumb. The Trees, stript of their Verdure, and lashed by Storms, spread their naked Arms to the enraged and relentless Heavens. Fragrance no longer floats in the Air; but chilling Damps hover, or cutting Gales blow. Nature, divested of all her beautiful Robes, sits, like a forlorn disconsolate Widow, in her Weeds. While Winds, in doleful Accents, howl; and Rains, in repeated Showers, weep.

We regret not, therefore, the speedy Departure of the Day. When the Room is hung with *funeral Black*, and dismal Objects are all around; who would desire to have the *glimmering Taper* kept alive? Which can only discover Spectacles of Sorrow; can only make the Horror visible.—And, since this mortal  
Life

Life is little better than a continual Conflict with Sin, or an unremitted Struggle with Misery; is it not a *gracious* Ordination, which has reduced our Age to a *Span*? Four-score Years of Trial, for the Virtuous, are sufficiently long; and more than such a Term, allowed to the Wicked, would render them beyond all Measure vile. Our Way to the Kingdom of Heaven, lies through Tribulations. Shall we then *accuse*, shall we not rather *bless*, the Providence, which has made the Passage short? Soon, soon we cross the Vale of Tears; and then arrive on the happy Hills, where Light for ever shines, where Joy for ever smiles.

SOMETIMES, the Day is rendered shorter still; is almost blotted out from the Year\*. The Vapours gather; they thicken into an impenetrable Gloom; and obscure the Face of the Sky. At length, the *Rains* descend. The Sluices of the Firmament are opened; and the low-hung Clouds pour their congregated Stores. Copious and unintermitted still they pour; and still are unexhausted. The Waters drop incessantly from the Eaves, and rush in rapid Streams from the Spouts. They roar along the chanelled Pavements, and stand in foul Shadows amidst the Village-Streets. Now, if the inattentive Eye, or negligent Hand,

has  
\* *Involvere Diem Nimbi et Nox humida Cælum*  
*Abstulit—* VIRG.



has left the Roof but scantily covered; the insinuating Element finds its Way into every Flaw, and oozing through the Cieling, at once upbraids and chastises the careless Inhabitant. The Ploughman, soaked to the Skin, leaves his half-tilled Acre. The poor Poultry, dripping with Wet, croud into Shelter. The Tenants of the Bough fold up their Wings, afraid to launch into the streaming Air. The Beasts, joyless and dispirited, ruminate under their Sheds. The Roads swim, and the Brooks swell.—The *River*, amidst all this watry Ferment, long contained itself within its appointed Bounds. But, swollen by innumerable Currents; and roused, at last, into uncontrollable Rage; bursts over its Banks; shoots into the Plain; bears down all Opposition; spreads itself far and wide; and buries the Meadow under a brown, sluggish, soaking *Deluge*.

How happy for Man, that this Inundation comes, when there are no flowery Crops in the Valley, to be overwhelmed; no Fields standing thick with Corn, to be laid waste! At *such* a Juncture, it would have been *Ruin* to the Husbandman and his Family: but, *thus* timed, it yields *Manure* for his Ground, and promises Him *Riches* in Reversion.—How often, and how long, has the Divine Majesty bore with the most injurious Affronts from Sinners! His

Good-

Goodness triumphed over their Perverseness, and graciously refused to be exasperated. But, O presumptuous Creatures, multiply no longer your Provocations. Urge not, by repeated Iniquities, the Almighty Arm to strike; lest his Long-suffering cease, and his fierce Anger break forth; break forth, like a *Flood of Waters*\*, and sweep you away, into irrecoverable and everlasting Perdition.

How mighty! how majestic! and O! how mysterious are thy Works, thou God of Heaven, and LORD of Nature! When the Air is calm, where sleep the *stormy Winds*? In what Chambers are they reposed, or in what Dungeons confined? Till thou art pleased to awaken their Rage, and throw open their Prison-doors. Then, with irresistible Impetuosity they fly forth, scattering Dread, and menacing Destruction.

THE whole Atmosphere is hurried into the most tumultuous Confusion. The aerial Torrent bursts its Way over Mountains, Seas, and Continents. All Things feel the dreadful Shock. All Things tremble before the furious Blast. The *Forest*, vexed and tore, groans under the Scourge. Her sturdy Sons are strained to the very Root, and almost sweep the Soil, they were wont to shade. The stubborn Oak, that disdains to bend, is dashed headlong to the Ground;

\* Hof. v 10.

Ground ; and, with shattered Arms, with prostrate Trunk, blocks the Road.—While the flexile Reed, that springs up in the Marsh, yielding to the Gust, (as the *meek* and pliant Temper, to Injuries; or the *resigned* and patient Spirit, to Misfortunes), eludes the Force of the Storm, and survives amidst the wide spread Havock.

FOR a Moment, the turbulent and outrageous Sky, seems to be asswaged: but, it intermits its Wrath, only to increase its Strength. Soon, the sounding Squadrons of the Air return to the Attack, and renew their Ravages with redoubled Fury. The stately Dome rocks, amidst the wheeling Clouds. The impregnable Tower totters on its Basis; and threatens to overwhelm, whom it was intended to protect. The ragged Rock is rent in Pieces\*; and even the Hills, the perpetual Hills, on their deep Foundations, are scarcely secure.—Where, now, is the Place of Safety? When the *City* reels, and Houses become Heaps! Sleep affrighted flies. Diversion is turned into Horror. All is Uproar in the Element; all is Consternation among Mortals; and nothing, but one wide Scene of rueful Devastation, through the Land.—Yet, this is only an *inferior* Minister of divine Displeasure. The Executioner of *milder* Indignation. How then,—O! *how will the lofty*

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Z

Looks

\* I Kings xix. 11.

*Looks of Man be humbled, and the Haughtiness of Men be bowed down\**; when the LORD GOD Omnipotent shall meditate Terror—when He shall set *all* his Terrors in Array—when He arises, to judge the Nations, and to *shake terribly* the Earth!

THE Ocean swells with tremendous Com-motions. The ponderous Waves are heaved from their capacious Bed, and almost lay bare the unfathomable Deep. Flung into the most rapid Agitation, they sweep over the Rocks; they lash the lofty Cliffs; and toss themselves into the Clouds. Navies are rent from their Anchors; and, with all their enormous Load, are whirled, swift as the Arrow, wild as the Winds, along the vast Abyss.—Now, they climb the rolling Mountain; they plough the fright-

\* — — — *Mortalia Corda*

*Per Gentes humilis stravit Pavor.*—

One would almost imagine, that *Virgil* had read *Isaiah*, and borrowed his Ideas from Chap. ii. Ver. 11. The *humilis* and *stravit* of the one, so exactly correspond with the—*humbled*—*bowed down*—of the other. But, in one Circumstance, the Prophet is very much superior to the Poet. The Prophet, by giving a striking *Contrast* to his Sentiments, represents them with incomparably greater Energy. He says not, *Men* in the gross, or the *human Heart* in general: but *Men* of the most *elated* Looks; Hearts big with the most *arrogant* Imaginations. Even *these* shall stoop from their supercilious Heights; even *these* shall grovel in the Dust of Abasement, and shudder with all the Extremes of an abject Pusillanimity.



frightful Ridge; and seem to skim the Skies. Anon, they plunge into the opening Gulf; they lose the Sight of Day; and are lost themselves to every Eye. How vain is the Pilot's Art! How impotent the Mariner's Strength! They reel to and fro, and stagger in the jarring Hold; or cling to the Cordage, while bursting Seas foam over the Deck. *Despair* is in every Face, and *Death* sits threatening on every Surge.—But why, O ye astonished Mariners, why should you abandon yourselves to Despair? Is the LORD's Hand *shortened*, because the Waves of the Sea rage horribly? Is his Ear *deafened*, by the roaring Thunders, and the bellowing Tempest? Cry, Cry unto HIM, who “holdeth the Winds in his Fist, “and the Waters in the Hollow of his Hand.” HE is all-gracious, to hear; and almighty to save. If HE command, the Storm shall be hushed to Silence: the Billows shall subside into a Calm: the Lightnings shall lay their fiery Bolts aside: and, instead of sinking in a watry Grave, you shall find Yourselves brought to the desired Haven.

SOMETIMES, after a joyless Day, a more dismal Night succeeds.—The lazy, louring Vapours had wove so thick a Veil, as the meridian Sun could scarcely penetrate. What Gloom then must overwhelm the nocturnal Hours! the Moon withdraws her Shining.

Not a single Star, is able to struggle through the deep Arrangement of Shades, All is *pitchy Darkneſs*, without one enlivening Ray. How ſolemn! How awful! 'Tis like the Shroud of Nature, or the Return of Chaos. I don't wonder, that it is the Parent of Terrors, and ſo apt to ingender Melancholy.—Lately, the Tempeſt marked its rapid Way with *Miſchief*; now, the Night drefſes her ſilent Pavilion with *Horror*.

I HAVE ſometimes left the beaming Tapers, withdrawn from the ruddy Fire, and plunged into the thickeſt of theſe footy Shades; without regretting the Change, rather exulting in it as a welcome Deliverance. The very Gloom was pleaſing, was exhilarating, compared with the Converſation, I quitted. The Speech of my Companions (how does it grieve me, that I ſhould *even once* have Occaſion to call them by *that Name*!) was the Language of Darkneſs: was Horror to the Soul, and Torture to the Ear.—*Their Teeth were Spears and Arrows, and their Tongue a ſharp Sword*, to ſtab and aſſaſſinate, their Neighbour's Character. *Their Throat was an open Sepulchre*, gaping to devour the Reputation of the Innocent, or tainting the Air with their virulent and polluted Breath.—Sometimes, their licentious and ungovernable Diſcourſe, ſhot Arrows of *Profane-  
neſs* againſt Heaven itſelf; and, in proud De-  
fiance,

fiance, challenged the Resentment of Omnipotence.—Sometimes, as if it was the Glory of human Nature, to cherish the *grassest* Appetites of the Brute; or the Mark of a Gentleman, to have served an Apprenticeship in a Brothel; the filthiest Jest of the Stews (if low *Obscenity* can be a Jest) were nauseously obtruded on the Company. All the *modest* Part were offended and grieved; while the other besotted Creatures laughed aloud, though the Leprosy of Uncleanness appeared on their Lips.—Are not these Persons *Prisoners of Darkness*; though blazing Sconces, pour artificial Day, through their Rooms? Are not their Souls immured in the most baleful Shades; though the Noon-tide Sun is brightened, by flaming on their gilded Chariots?—They discern not that great and adorable Being, who fills the Universe with his infinite and glorious Presence: who is *all Eye*, to observe their Actions; *all Ear*, to examine their words. They know not the all-sufficient Redeemer, nor the unspeakable Blessedness of his heavenly Kingdom. They are groping for the Prize of Happiness; but will certainly grasp the Thorn of Anxiety. They are wantonly sporting on the Brink of a Precipice; and are every Moment in Danger of falling headlong, into *irretrievable* Ruin, and *endless* Despair.

THEY have forced me out, and are, perhaps,  
 Z 3 deriding



deriding me in my Absence : are charging my Reverence for the ever-present GOD, and my Concern for the Dignity of our *rational* Nature, to the Account of Humour and Singularity ; to Narrowness of Thought, or Sourness of Temper. — Be it so. — I will indulge no Indignation against them. If any Thing like it *should* arise, I would convert it into Prayer—  
 “ Pity them, O Thou Father of Mercies !—  
 “ Shew them the Madness of their Profaneness !  
 “ —Shew them the Baseness of their vile  
 “ Ribaldry !—Let their dissolute Rant be turned  
 “ into silent Sorrow and Confusion. Till they  
 “ open their Lips, to adore thine *insulted* Majesty, and to implore thy gracious Pardon.  
 “ Till they devote to thy Service, those social  
 “ Hours, and those superior Faculties, which  
 “ they are now abusing—to the Dishonour of  
 “ thy Name—to the Contamination of their  
 “ own Souls—and (unless timely Repentance  
 “ intervene) to their everlasting Infamy and  
 “ Perdition.”

I RIDE home amidst the gloomy Void. All darkling and solitary, I can scarce discern my Horse's Head ; and only guess out my blind Road. *No Companion*, but Danger ; or perhaps  
 “ Destruction ready at my Side\*.” — But, why do I fancy myself *solitary* ? Is not the Father of Lights ; the God of my Life ; the great and ever-

\* Job. xviii. 12.



everlasting Friend; always at my Right-hand? Because the Day is excluded, is his Omnipresence vacated? Though I have no earthly Acquaintance near, to assist in case of a Misfortune; or to beguile the Time, and divert uneasy Suspicions, by entertaining Conferences; may I not lay my Help upon the Almighty, and converse with God by humble Supplication? For this Exercise, no Place is improper; no Hour unseasonable; and no posture incommodious. This is *Society*, the best of Society, even in Solitude. This is a Fund of Delights, easily portable, and quite inexhaustible. A *Treasure* this, of unknown Value; liable to no Hazard, from Wrong or Robbery; but perfectly secure, to the lonely Wanderer, in the most darksome Paths.

AND why should I distress myself with Apprehensions of *Peril*? This Access to God, is not only an indefeasible Privilege, but a kind of *ambulatory Garrison*. Those, who make known their Requests unto God, and rely upon his protecting Care; He gives *his Angels* Charge over their Welfare. His Angels are commissioned, to escort them in their Traveling; and to hold up their Goings, that they dash not their Foot against a Stone\*. Nay, *He Himself* condescends to be their Guardian, and “keeps all their Bones, so that not one of  
“ them

“them is broken.”—Between these Persons, and the most mischievous Objects, a Treaty of Peace is concluded. The Articles of this grand Alliance, are recorded in the Book of Revelation; and will, when it is for the real Benefit of Believers, assuredly be made good, in the Administrations of Providence. *In the Day, saith the LORD, will I make a Covenant for them with the Beasts of the Field, and with the Fowls of Heaven, and with the creeping Things of the Ground; and they shall be in League with the Stones of the Field* \*. Though they fall headlong on the Flints; even the Flints, fited to fracture the Skull, shall receive them as into the Arms of Friendship; and not offer to hurt, whom the LORD is pleased to preserve.

MAY I then enjoy the presence of this gracious God, and Darkness and Light shall be both alike. Let HIM whisper Peace to my Conscience; and this dread Silence shall be more charming, than the Voice of Eloquence, or the Strains of Music. Let HIM reveal his ravishing Perfections in my Soul; and I shall not want the saffron Beauties of the Morn, the golden Glories of Noon, or the impurpled Evening Sky. I shall sigh only for those most desirable and distinguished Realms; where, the Light of HIS Countenance *perpetually* shines, and consequently—“there is \* no Night there.”

How

\* Job v. 23. Hof. ii. 18. † Rev. xxi. 25.

How surprising are the Alterations of Nature! I left her, the preceding Evening, plain and unadorned. But, now, a *thick Rime* has shed its hoary Honours over all. It has shagged the Fleeces of the Sheep, and crisped the Traveller's Locks. The Hedges are richly fringed, and all the Ground is profusely powdered. The downward Branches are tasseled with Silver, and the upright are feathered with the plummy Wave.

THE *Fine*, are not always the *Valuable*. The Air, amidst all these gaudy Decorations, is charged with chilling and *unwholsome* Damps. The raw hazy Influence spreads wide; sits deep; hangs heavy and oppressive on the Springs of Life. A listless Languor clogs the animal Functions; and the purple Stream glides but faintly through its Channels. In vain, the Ruler of the Day exerts his beaming Powers: In vain, He attempts to disperse this Insurrection of Vapours. The sullen, malignant Cloud refuses to depart. It envelops the World, and *intercepts* the *Prospect*. I look abroad for the neighbouring Village; I send my Eye in quest of the rising Turret; but am scarce able to discern the very next House. Where are the blue Arches of Heaven? Where is the radiant Countenance of the Sun? Where the boundless Scenes of Creation? Lost, lost are their beauties; quenched their Glories.

The



The thronged Theatre of the Universe, seems an empty Void; and all its elegant Pictures, an undistinguished Blank.—Thus would it have been with our intellectual Views, if the *Gospel* had not come in to our Relief. We should have known, neither our true Good, nor real Evil. We had been a Riddle to ourselves; the present State all Confusion, and the future impenetrable Darkness. But, the Sun of Righteousness, arising with potent and triumphant Beams, has dissipated the interposing Cloud. Has opened a Prospect, more beautiful, than the Blossoms of Spring; more cheering, than the Treasures of Autumn; and far more enlarged, than the Extent of the visible System. Which, having led the Eye of the Mind, through Fields of Grace, over Rivers of Righteousness, and Hills crowned with Knowledge; terminates, at length, in the Heavens; sweetly losing itself in Regions of infinite Bliss, and endless Glory.

As I walk along the Fog, it seems, at some little Distance, to be almost solid Gloom; such as would shut out every Glimpse of Light, and totally imprison me in Obscurity. But, when I approach, and enter it; I find myself agreeably mistaken, and the Mist much *thinner*, than it *appeared*.—Such is the Case, with regard to the Sufferings of the present Life; they are not, when experienced, so dreadful, as a timorous

Ima-



Imagination furnished. Such also is the Case, with reference to the *Gratifications of Sense*; they prove not, when enjoyed, so substantial, as a sanguine Expectation represented. In both Instances, we are graciously disappointed. The keen Edge of the Calamity is blunted, that it may not wound us with incurable Anguish: the exquisite Relish of the Prosperity is palled, that it may not captivate our Affections, and enslave them to inferior Delights.

SOMETIMES, the Face of Things wears a more pleasing Form; the very Reverse of the foregoing. The sober Evening advances, to close the short-lived Day. The Firmament, clear and un sullied, puts on its brightest Blue. The Stars, in thronging Multitudes, and with a peculiar Brillancy, glitter thro' the fair Expanse. While the *Frost* pours its subtle and penetrating Influence, all around. Sharp and intensely severe, all the long Night, the rigid Æther continues its Operations. When, late and slow, the Morning opens her pale Eye; in what a curious and amusing Disguise is Nature dressed! The Icicles, jagged and uneven, are pendent on the Houses. A whitish Film incrusts the Windows, where mimic Landscapes rise, and fancied Figures swell. The fruitful Fields are hardened to Iron; the moistened Meadows are congealed to Marble; and both resound (an Effect unknown before) with the Peasant's  
hasty

hasty Tread. The Stream is arrested in its Career, and its ever-flowing Surface chained to the Banks. The fluid Paths become a solid Road; where the finny Shoals were wont to rove, the sportive Youth slide, or the rattling Chariots roll\*. And (what would seem, to an Inhabitant of the Southern World, as unaccountable as the deepest Mysteries of our Religion) that very same Breath of Heaven, which, *cements* the Lakes into a crystal Pavement; *cleaves* the Oaks, as it were with invisible Wedges: “*breaks in Pieces the Northern Iron, and the Steel;*” even while it *builds* a Bridge of Icy Rock, over the Seas†.

THE Air is all Serenity. Refined by the nitrous Particles, it affords the most distinct Views, and extensive Prospects. The Seeds of *Infection* are killed; and the *Pestilence* destroyed, even in Embryo. So, the Cold of *Affliction* tends to mortify our Corruptions, and subdue our vicious Habits. — The crowding Atmosphere  
con-

\* *Undaque jam tergo ferratos sustinet orbis,  
Puppibus illa prius patulis, nunc hospita plaustis.  
Æraque dissiliunt vulgo.* VIRG.

† *Job xxxviii. 30. The Waters are hid, locked up from the Cattle's Lips, and secured from the Fisher's Net, as Wells were wont to be closed with a ponderous and impenetrable Stone. And not only Lakes and Rivers, but the Surface of the great Deep, with its restless, and uncontrollable Surges, is taken Captive by the Frost, and bound in shining Fetters.*

constrains our Bodies, and braces our Nerves. The Spirits are buoyant, and fall briskly on the Execution of their Office. In the Summer-Months, such an unclouded Sky, and so bright a Sun, would have melted us with Heat, and softened us into Supineness. We should have been ready to throw our Limbs under the spreading Beach, and to lie at Ease by the murmuring Brook. -But, now, none loiters in his Path; none is seen with folded Arms. All is in Motion; all is Activity. Choice, prompted by the Weather, supplies the Spur of Necessity. Thus, the *rugged* School of Misfortune, often trains up the Mind, to a vigorous Exertion of its Faculties. The *bleak* Climate of *Adversity*, often inspires us with a manly Resolution. When a soft and downy Affluence, perhaps, would have relaxed all the generous Springs of the Soul; and have left it enervated with Pleasure, or dissolved in Indolence.

“ *COLD* cometh out of the North.” The Winds, having swept those Desarts of Snow, arm themselves with Millions of frozen Particles, and make a fierce Descent upon our Isle. Under black and scowling Clouds, they drive, dreadfully whizzing, through the darkened Air. They growl around our Houses; assault our Doors; and, eager for Entrance, fasten on our Windows. Walls can scarce restrain them; Bars are unable to exclude them; through



every Cranny they force their Way. Ice is on their Wings; they scatter Agues through the Land; and Winter, all Winter, rages as they go. Their Breath is as a searing \* Iron to the little Verdure, left in the Plains. Vastly more pernicious to the tender Plants, than the sharpest Knife: they kill their Branches, and wound the very Root. Let not the Corn venture to peep too freely from the Entrenchment of the Furrow; let not the fruit-bearing Blossoms dare to come abroad, from their Lodgment in the Bark; lest these murderous Blasts intercept and seize the unwary Strangers, and destroy the Hopes of the advancing Year.

O, 'tis severely cold! Who is so hardy, as not to shrink at this *excessively pinching* Weather? See! Every Face is pale. Even the blooming Cheeks contract a gelid Hue; and the Teeth hardly forbear chattering.—Ye that sit easy and joyous, amidst your commodious Apartments, solacing yourselves in the diffusive Warmth of your Fire; be mindful of your Brethren, in the cheerless Tenement of Poverty.

*Their*

\* This, I suppose, is the Meaning of that figurative Expression, used by the Prophet *Habakkuk*; who, speaking of the *Chaldeans* invading *Judea*, says—*Their Faces*, or the Incursions they make, *shall sup up*, shall swallow greedily, shall devour utterly, the Inhabitants of the Country, and their valuable Effects; *as the keen, corroding Blasts of the East Wind*, destroy every green Thing in the Field. *Hab. i. 9.*



# A WINTER-PIECE. 271

*Their* shattered Panes are open to the piercing Winds; a tattered Garment, scarcely covers their shivering Flesh; while a few faint and dying Embers on the squalid Hearth, rather mock their Wishes than warm their Limbs. — While the generous Juices of *Oporto*, sparkle in your Glasses; or the Streams, beautifully tinged and deliciously flavoured with the *Chinese* Leaf, smoke in the elegant Porcelain: O remember, that many of your Fellow-Creatures, amidst all the Rigour of these inclement Skies, are emaciated with Sicknes; benumbed with Age; and pining with Hunger. Let “their Loins bless you,” for comfortable Cloathing. Restore them with Medicine; regale them with Food; and baffle the raging Year. So, may you never know any of their Distresses, but only by the Hearing of the Ear; the Seeing of the Eye; or the Feeling of a tender Commiseration! — Methinks, the bitter blustering Winds plead for the poor Indigents. May they breathe Pity into *your* Breasts; while they blow Hardships into *their* Huts! — Observe those blue Flames, and ruddy Coals, in your Chimney; quickened by the Cold, they look more lively, and glow more strongly. Silent, but seasonable Admonition to the gay Circle, that chat and smile around them! *Thus*, may your Hearts, at such a Juncture of Need, kindle into a peculiar Benevolence! Detain not your

superfluous Piles of Wood. Let them hasten to the Relief of the starving Family. Bid them expire in many a willing Blaze, to mitigate the Severity of the Season, and cheer the bleak Abodes of Want. So shall they ascend, mingled with Thanksgivings to God, and ardent Prayers for your Welfare—ascend, more grateful to Heaven, than Columns of the most costly Incense.

Now the Winds cease. Having brought their Load, they are dismissed from Service. They have wasted an immense Cargo of Clouds, which empty themselves in *Snow*. At first, a few scattered Shreds come wandering down the saddened Sky. This flight Skirmish is succeeded by a general Onset. The Flakes, large, and numerous, and thick-wavering, descend. They dim the Air, and hasten the Approach of Night. Through all the Night, in softest Silence, and with a continual Flow, this fleecy Shower falls. In the Morning, when we awake, what a surprising Change appears!—Is this the same World? Here is no Diversity of Colour! I can hardly distinguish the Trees, from the Hills on which they grow. Which are the Meadows, and which are the Plains? Where are the green Pastures, and where the fallow Lands? All Things lie blended in bright Confusion. So bright, that it heightens the Splendor of Day, and even dazles the Organs of Sight.

# A WINTER-PIECE. 273

Sight.—The Lawn is not so fair, as this snowy Mantle, which invests the Fields; and even the Lily, was the Lily to appear, would look tarnished in its Presence. I can think of but *one* Thing, which *excels* or equals the glittering Robe of Winter. Is any Person desirous to know my Meaning? He may find it explained in that admirable Hymn\*, composed by the Royal Penitent. Is any desirous to possess this matchless Ornament? He will find it offered to his Acceptance, in every Page of the Gospel.

SEE! (for the Eye cannot satisfy itself, without viewing again and again the curious, the delicate Scene) See! how the Hedges are habited, like spotless Vestals! The Houses are roofed with Uniformity and Lustre. The Meadows are covered with a Carpet of the finest Ermine†. The Groves bow, beneath the lovely Burden: and all, all below, is one wide, immense, shining Waste of White.—By deep Snows, and heavy Rains, GOD seal-  
*eth up the Hand of every Man.* And for this Purpose,

A a 3

\* Can any Thing be whiter than Snow? Yes, saith David: if GOD be pleased to wash me from my Sins in the Blood of CHRIST, *I shall be even whiter than Snow.* Psa. li. 7. See Page 139, 140.

† This Animal is Milk white. As for those black Spots, which We generally see, in Linings of Ermine, they are added by the Furrier. In order to diversify the Appearance, or heighten the Beauty, of the native Colour.

Purpose, adds our sacred Philosopher, *that all Men may know his Work\**; He confines them within their Doors, and puts a Stop to their secular Business; that they may consider the Things, which belong to their spiritual Welfare. That, having a Vacation from their ordinary Employ, they may observe the Works of his Power, and become acquainted with the Mysteries of his Grace.

AND worthy, worthy of all Observation, are the Works of the great Creator. They are prodigiously various, and perfectly amazing. How pliant and ductile is Nature, under his forming Hand! At his Command, the self-same Substance assumes the most different Shapes; and is transformed into an endless Multiplicity of Figures. If HE ordains, the Water is *moulded* into Hail, and discharged upon the Earth like a Volley of Shot; or it is *consolidated* into Ice, and defends the Rivers, “as it were with a Breast-plate.” At the bare Intimation of his Will, the very same Element is scattered in Hoar-Frost, like a Sprinkling of the most *attenuated* Ashes; or, is spread over the Surface of the Ground, in these Couches of swelling and *flaky* Down.

THE SNOW, however it may carry the Appearance of Cold, affords a *warm* Garment for the Corn; screens it from nipping Frosts, and cherishes,

\* Job xxxvii. 7.



cherishes its infant Growth. It will abide for a while, to exert a protecting Care, and exercise a fostering Influence. Then, touched by the Sun, or thawed by a softened Gale; the furry Vesture, melts into genial Moisture; sinks deep into the Soil, and saturates its Pores with the dissolving Nitre: replenishing the Glebe with those Principles of vegetative Life, which will open into the Bloom of Spring, and ripen into the Fruits of Autumn.—Beautiful Emblem this, and comfortable Representation of the Divine Word; both in the successful, and advantageous Issue of its Operation! *As the Rain cometh down, and the Snow from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the Earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give Seed to the Sower, and Bread to the Eater: So shall my Word be, that goeth forth out of my Mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the Thing whereunto I sent it\*.*

NATURE, at length, puts off her lucid Veil. She drops it, in a trickling Thaw. The loosened Snow, rolls in Sheets from the Houses. Various Openings spot the Hills; which, even while we look, become larger, and more numerous. The Trees rid themselves, by Degrees, of the hoary Incumbrance. Shook from the

\* Isa. iv. 10, 11.

the springing Boughs, Part falls heavy to the Ground, Part flies abroad in shining Atoms. Our Fields and Gardens, lately buried beneath the drifted Heaps, rise plain and distinct to View.—Since we see Nature once again, has she no verdant Traces, no beautiful Features, left? They are, like real Friends, very rare; and therefore the more particularly, to be regarded, the more highly to be valued.—Here and there, the *Holly* hangs out her glowing Berries; the *Laurustinus* spreads her graceful Tufts; and both, under a Covert of unfading Foliage.—The plain, but hardy *Ivy* cloaths the decrepit, crazy Wall; nor shrinks from the friendly Office, tho' the Skies frown, and the Storms roar.—The *Laurel*, firm, erect, and bold, expands its Leaf of vivid Green. In spite of the united, the repeated Attacks of Wind, and Rain, and Frost, it preserves an undismayed lively Look; and maintains its Post, while withering Millions fall around. Worthy, by vanquishing the rugged Force of Winter, worthy to adorn the triumphant Conqueror's Brow.—Nor must I forget the *Bay-tree*; which scorns to be a mean Pensioner, on a few transient sunny Gleams; or, with a servile Obsequiousness, to vary its Appearance, in Conformity to the changing Seasons. By such Indications of sterling Worth, and staunch Resolution, reading a Lecture to the  
Poet's

Poet's Genius; while it weaves the Chaplet for his Temples.—These, and a few other Plants, clad with native Verdure, retain their comely Aspect, in the bleakest Climes, and in the coldest Months.

SUCH, and so durable, are the Accomplishments of a *refined* Understanding, and an *amiable* Temper. The tawdry Ornaments of Dress, which catch the unthinking Vulgar, soon become insipid and despicable. The rubied Lip, and the rosy Cheek fade. Even the sparkling Wit \*, as well as the sparkling Eye, please but for

\* “How little does God esteem the Things that Men count great; the Endowments of Wit and Eloquence, that Men admire in some! Alas! how poor are they to Him! He respecteth not any who are wise in Heart: they are nothing, and less than nothing, in his Eyes. Even *wise* Men admire, how little it is that Men know; how small a Matter lies under the Sound of these popular Wonders, a learned Man, a great Scholar, a great Statesman. How much more doth the all-wise God meanly account of These! He often discovers, even to the World, their Meanings. He *besoots* them. So Valour, or Birth, or worldly Greatness, these He gives, and gives as Things He makes no great Reckoning of, to such as shall never see his Face; and calls to the Inheritance of Glory poor despised Creatures, that are looked on as the *Off-scourings*, and *Refuse* of the World.”

—THUS says an excellent Author; who writes with the most amiable Spirit of Benevolence; with the most unaffected Air of Humility; and like the sacred Ori-

for a Moment. But the virtuous Mind has Charms, which survive the Decay of every inferior Embellishment. Charms, which add to the Fragrancy of the Flower, the *Permanency* of the *Ever-green*.

SUCH, likewise, is the Happiness of the sincerely Religious; like a Tree, says the inspired Moralist, "whose Leaf shall not fall." He borrows not his Peace from external Circumstances; but has a Fund within, and is "satisfied from himself\*." Even tho' impoverished by calamitous Accidents; He is rich in the *Possession* of *Grace*, and richer in the *Hope* of *Glory*. His Joys are infinitely superior to, as well as nobly independent on, the transitory Glow of sensual Delight, or the capricious Favours of, what the World calls, Fortune.

IF the *Snow* composes the light-armed Troops of the Sky; methinks the *Hail* constitutes

Originals, from which he copies, with a majestic Simplicity of Style.—Whose *select Works* I may venture to recommend, not only as a Treasure, but as a MINE of genuine, sterling, evangelical Piety.—See Page 520 of Archbishop LEIGHTON'S *select Works*, the *Edinburgh* Edition, Octavo. Which it is necessary to specify, because the *London* Edition does not contain that Part of his Writings, which has supplied me with the preceding Quotation.

\* Prov. xiv. 14.



stitutes its heavy Artillery\*. When driven by a vehement Wind, with what dreadful Impetuosity, does that stony Shower fall! How it rebounds from the frozen Ground, and rattles on the resounding Dome! It attenuates the Rivers into Smoke, or scourges them into Foam. It crushes the infant Flowers; cuts in Pieces the Gardener's early Plants; and batters the feeble Fortification of his Glasses into Shivers. It Darts into the Traveller's Face: He turns, with Haste, from the Stroke; or feels, on his Check, for the gushing Blood. If he would retreat into the House, it follows him even thither; and, like a determined Enemy, that pushes the Pursuit, dashes through the crackling Panes.—But, the fierce Attack is quickly over. The Clouds have soon spent their Shafts; soon unstrung their Bow. Happy for the Inhabitants of the Earth, that a Sally so dreadfully *furios*, should be so remarkably *short*! What else could endure the Shock, or escape Destruction?

BUT, behold a *Bow*, of no hostile Intention! A Bow, painted in varigated Colours, on the dis-

\* *He casteth forth his Ice like Morfels.* Psal. cxlvii. 17. Which, in modern Language, might be thus expressed: *He poureth his Hail like a Volly of Shot.* The Word translated *Morfels*, alludes, I think, to those *Fragments* of the Rock, or those *smooth Stones* from the Brook, which, in a Day of Battle, the Warriors hurled from their Slings.

disburdened Cloud. How vast is the Extent, how delicate the Texture, of that *showery Arch* ! It compasseth the Heavens, with a glorious Circle; and teaches us to forget the Horrors of the Storm. Elegant its Form, and rich its Texture; but more delightful its sacred Significance. While the Violet and the Rose, blush in its beautiful Aspect; the Olive-branch smiles in its gracious Import. It writes, in radiant Dyes, what the Angels sung in harmonious Strains; "Peace on Earth, and Good-will towards Men." It is the Stamp of *Insurance*, for the Continuance of Seed-Time, and Harvest; for the Preservation and Security of the visible World \*. It is the comfortable *Token* †, of a better State, and a happier Kingdom—a Kingdom, where Sin shall cease, and Misery be abolished; where Storms shall beat, and Winter pierce no more; but Holiness, Happiness, and Joy, like one unbounded *Spring*, for ever, ever bloom.

\* Gen. ix. 12—16.

† Rev. iv. 3.



# A T A B L E OF THE T E X T S

*More or less illustrated in this Work.*

*N. B.* •As Dr. SHAW in the Supplement to his *Excellent Book of Travels*, and several other Authors of the *greatest* Eminences, have given an Index of Scriptures, occasionally Explained in their Writings; I doubt not, but I shall oblige *many* of my Readers, by what I *here* subjoin; those espically, whose Taste is happily formed to relish the Beauties of the sacred Records.

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